THE LAST LIBERAL
MICHAEL NOVAK

the weekly
Standard

MAY 24, 2004

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WHY WE FIGHT

Who is Abu Musab al Zarqawi?
ROBERT S. LEIKEN & STEVEN BROOKE

Who's afraid of Abu Ghraib?
REUEL MARC GERECHT

Do Democrats want to win the war?
DAVID GELERNTER

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Choice. Control. Education.

Kids today face a complex media environment. Television, movies, radio, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, video games—so many choices, and sometimes, not much guidance.

But when it comes to cable television, we're working hard to give parents and caregivers the tools they need to manage the flow of programming into their homes and make responsible viewing choices with their families.

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Control

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Education

Cable Puts **You** in Control features public service announcements, an information-rich Web site (www.ControlYourTV.org), customer communications tools for cable companies and programmers, and workshops on media literacy co-sponsored by Cable in the Classroom and the National PTA.

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To learn more, visit **www.ControlYourTV.org** or call us at 202/775-3629.

CABLE in the CLASSROOM
The Cable Industry's Education Foundation

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Cable Puts **You** in Control is a consumer education initiative of Cable in the Classroom and the National Cable & Telecommunications Association.

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Self-Absorption for $100

Early last month, 15 Washington political gabsters were invited to be contestants on a special, weeklong charity-benefit edition of *Jeopardy*, the venerable TV quiz show hosted by Alex Trebek. Tapes of "Power Players Week" have since been aired, and having watched a few installments, THE SCRAPBOOK can only marvel at the sophistication with which *Jeopardy*'s producers selected their guests. Such a perfect reflection of modern America's news-talk green room melting pot: Some were men, and some were women. Genuinely successful broadcast pundits like Tim Russert of *Meet the Press* were there. And so was Al Franken.

THE SCRAPBOOK's personal favorite episode was the one featuring our old friend and WEEKLY STANDARD colleague Tucker Carlson, who was matched up against *Washington Post* eminence Bob Woodward and former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan, now a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. Ms. Noonan was at her pixieish, subversive best—either that or she was on some especially powerful cold medication, we can't be sure. At one point Noonan shouted out an (incorrect) answer without buzzing. At another, asked to name a 1960 gladiator movie starring Kirk Douglas, Noonan yelped, "Baryshnikov!"

Similarly peculiar was the trajectory of Carlson's performance. He couldn't do anything right at first. But then the questions—or "answers," in *Jeopardy*-speak—turned to ballet, at which point Tucker's fortunes skyrocketed. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

Not that there's anything wrong with the entire "Power Players Week" idea, in fact. It was for a worthy cause, after all. Each player had designated a charity to which his prospective winnings would be donated, and a fairly generous hunk of money was involved: Each first-place finisher's charity would receive $50,000, with $20,000 going to the runners-up. Which brings us to the third member of the Carlson-Noonan-Woodward trio. Woodward, despite his reputation for being extremely well-informed, was bested by Tucker Carlson, though his choice of charity certainly stood out.

To whom did Woodward give away the resulting $20 grand? Here's a hint: Education is important; the children are our future. That's why, Woodward told Alex Trebek, he'd decided to sign over his *Jeopardy* prize to a needy "little school" in "Washington, D.C.," called "Sidwell Friends."

What a guy, huh? Now a whole new generation of needy children will be guaranteed access to the same Sidwell Friends education that needy children like Chelsea Clinton and Albert Gore III once received. Needy children like Bob Woodward's own daughter, who now attends Sidwell's elementary school.

Otherwise, the school would have had to scrape by on the proceeds of its pitiful $29,540,997 endowment. ♦

The O'Failure Factor, Cont.

Wait, back up. Did somebody mention Al Franken?

It seems THE SCRAPBOOK has incorrectly interpreted—and consequently misreported—a series of recent developments involving Franken & Co.'s start-up liberal talk-radio network, Air America. We thought it was *bad news* for the project when, in lightning succession:

Air America first lost its signal and got kicked out of its offices in Chicago and Los Angeles; then announced that its CEO was resigning; then forced out and replaced its director of programming; and, finally, had its board chairman and vice chairman both quit on the same day.

But it turns out it wasn't bad news. What's happened, instead, as Air America president Jon Sinton explained to Sue Zeidler of Reuters last week, is that, well, "The business model has changed with our on-air success."

That's why Sinton has decided to abandon Air America's attempt to secure replacement station leases in Chicago and Los Angeles, and has closed the network's sales offices in both cities, laying off "15 to 20 people."

THE SCRAPBOOK sincerely regrets the error. ♦

How the News Gets Fit to Print

Reporter John Leland's front-page *New York Times* story last Wednesday suggested that the Bush administration's new prescription drug benefit plan is producing "chaos" for seniors on Medicare. Prominently quoted to that effect were two ostensibly average such seniors: a Mrs. Mildred Fruhling, 76, and retired Dr. Sydney Bild, 81. Fruhling's complaints about the program's discount cards, in fact, were the bulk of Leland's four paragraph lead.

Twenty-four hours later, last Thursday, the *Times* ran the following "Editor's Note" on page A2:

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An article yesterday about confusion surrounding new prescription drug discount cards . . . included comments in the first four paragraphs from Mildred Fruhling and later in the article from Dr. Sydney Bild. Unknown to the writer, both had been interviewed for a video on a Web site operated by Families USA, a consumer advocacy group that has criticized current Medicare policy as inadequate. When approached by The Times during the preparation of the article, Families USA suggested Mrs. Fruhling and Dr. Bild as interviewees without disclosing that they had appeared in the video. Had that been known, The Times would have chosen others to comment for the article or would have made clear the two interviewees' connection to the advocacy group.

This is most interesting. Note what it is exactly that troubles the *Times* about Leland's story: It isn't actually the story at all, it's the existence of a videotape that too obviously exposes the story's biased construction. Only "had that been known" (Fruhling and Bild's appearance in this videotape) would Leland's story have been written differently. Otherwise, the inference clearly is, Leland's story was fine. The fact that Leland was steered to Fruhling and Bild by a politically interested activist group but chose to present them, instead, as randomly typical seniors—and chose never to mention the activist group at all . . . well, that doesn't seem to bother the *Times*'s editors one bit.

These people are hopeless. ♦

Prison Statistics Abuse

Also in last Wednesday's *New York Times*, on page A17, was Fox Butterfield's classically obtuse dispatch about a study recently released by the Sentencing Project, "a prison research and advocacy group." It turns out that "almost 10 percent of all inmates in state and federal prison are serving life sentences," a figure that represents "an increase of 83 percent from 1992." Butterfield reports these data in a tone that suggests they are self-evidently distressing and unwelcome.

For instance: "The increase is not the result of a growth in crime, which actually fell 35 percent from 1992 to 2002." This is rather like complaining that more and more people are getting flu shots even though fewer people are getting sick. Fox Butterfield is aghast! The possibility that longer prison sentences might be a *reason* for lower crime rates seems not to have occurred to him.

It also seems not to have occurred to him that some malicious person might have fun quoting the following sentence (only slightly) out of context: "The report did not suggest why inmates serving life terms have a lower recidivism rate."

Hint: It might have something to do with the fact that when they finally get out of jail, they're dead. ♦

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Casual

Here Comes the Sun

The sun and I are in a Mexican standoff. In Cancun, appropriately enough. He glares down from his cloudless perch, unblinking. I am more furtive, peeking out from protective cover to squint up, determined not to let UV rays fry my tender flesh.

Every beach excursion of my adult life has ended in an agony of sunburn and blisters. I seem to lack melanin of any kind, and, with it, the ability to tan, or spend more than a few minutes in the sun without dire consequences. I also seem to lack the good sense to give up and resign myself to ghostly pallor. So each summer the battle is joined anew.

This time my old nemesis will not prevail.

Scampering off to Cancun with my mother in tow for an exotic beach vacation seemed like a great idea when we booked the trip at the chilly, rainy end of a Washington winter. I knew it wouldn't quite be *Girls Gone Wild*, but I had visions of my bikini-clad self frolicking in the sand and surf, hobnobbing with beautiful people who, like me, were lucky enough to be on vacation.

How foolish I was. Of course, the enemy was waiting for me here, stronger than ever thanks to the proximity of the equator.

Don't think I came here unprepared to do battle, however: I am armed. A trip to the dermatologist yielded special formula sunscreen, SPF 45, thank you very much. "Reapply at regular intervals and after swimming." You bet I will.

My mother, from whom I inherited my fish-belly pigmentation, was up at the crack of dawn our first day to claim a cabana. Like cigarettes in prison, cabanas are a resort trading commodity. They are few and far between—and thatched in palm fronds—for reasons knowable only to the elite brotherhood of beach landscapers.

We set up our defensive position under this hard-won cabana, sticky with sunscreen, swathed in sarongs, broad-brimmed hats, and sunglasses. A generous observer might say we have an air of mystery. In truth, we look more like the Bathory family vacation.

Darren Gygi

Yet I can't stay under our cabana forever. Sure, there is plenty to do. When paging through magazines full of people with glowing, sun-kissed skin gets dull, I watch as other beachgoers (including the single topless specimen of Eurotrash in my line of sight) interact with each other, in the process of turning various shades of gold and bronze. And I won't starve—rum-based drinks and octopus ceviche are delivered to my lounge chair with astonishing regularity.

(On the topic of beach ceviche, by the way, this word from a friend who hates not just the sun, but the sea as well: "Isn't there something invigorating about consuming ocean creatures at the very boundary of their domain? It is an affront to the ocean. Excellent.")

But from beyond that bright strip of burning sand fraught with peril, the water beckons, clear and beautiful. I venture out. I try to leap across. Each time, the enemy swoops down upon me, unbearably bright and hot. Game over and back to the beginning, to the safety of the shade.

It has always been thus. Childhood photographs of visits to our grandparents' house near the beach show one golden child, white-blonde streaks in her hair, face upturned like a sunflower. This child, favorite of the sun god Ra, is my sister. Off to the side, in the shadow of the beach umbrella or palm tree, you can see me, a blue-white Madame X junior—a splatter of freckles the only evidence that my pale flesh had ever felt the warmth of the sun's rays.

In an effort to console her distraught photophobic granddaughter, my grandmother promised me that if I got enough freckles, one day they would merge into a tan. After years of trying to coax the pathetically few spots of color to merge, I figured out she had been pulling my leg and became the cynical and bitter person I am today.

So far so good. I am determined that in the end my vigilance will pay off. When I return to the office, my coworkers are sure to scoff—*You were in Cancun for a week and your skin is still so white we can almost see your internal organs?* Shows how little they know. When I look into the mirror, I'll see my pallor for what it is: the glow of victory.

Katherine Mangu-Ward

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Government-managed competition?
Central state planning?
The old Soviet Union?

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President Bush has announced a bold national goal on broadband deployment, calling for investment in infrastructure, creation of jobs and broad new choices for consumers.

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Europe a Creek

In "Europe's Non-Strategy" (May 10), Gerard Alexander shows that while Europeans believe poverty and injustice in the Middle East are the "root causes" of terrorism, they are doing little to address such poverty and social injustice in the Middle East.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. The Europeans are paralyzed because they understand, even at the most basic level, that the best way to address poverty in the world at large, and the Middle East in particular, would be the advancement of free market approaches to economic life. But since Europe has long since abandoned advocacy of free markets, this is something that the continent will not (indeed, cannot) do.

William Van Nest
Wayne, NJ

In his lucid "Europe's Non-Strategy," Gerard Alexander establishes a number of reasons to explain Europe's failure to offer alternatives to the United States' long-term antiterrorism strategy. But perhaps Europe's problem is more profound. Perhaps, indeed, Europe's intellectual contribution to the ideologies that spawn terror cannot be excluded as a fundamental reason behind the continent's inaction. The historical landscape of the last century is littered with the corpses of the victims of economic and political experiments conceived by the European intelligentsia.

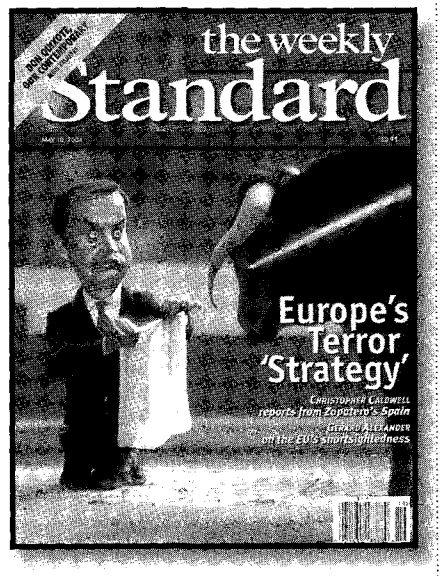
Thus, as Alexander points out, it is "Europeans who are averse to transformational agendas." In other words, the continent is scarred by its tortured relationship with "transformational" agendas. The extreme practitioners of European ideologies—such as Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, Pol Pot, and Saddam Hussein—are permanent reminders and painful symbols of political experiments gone terribly wrong.

Hugo Enrique Bargioni
Miami, FL

Special Issue

I read with interest Stephen F. Hayes's "Cheney vs. Kerry" (May 10). The article reports that the Bush reelection campaign plans to use national security as an issue in the upcoming presidential campaign. Presumably such an effort will include scathing attacks on John Kerry—a decorated Vietnam veteran—in order to portray the senator as weak on defense.

But the Bush campaign's view of today's security needs is self-defeating, not to mention inadequate. Bush's idea seems to be that law enforcement and military action are mutually exclusive in our struggle against terrorism. Thus Bush's surrogates attack Kerry for understanding our post-9/11 world as one rife with broadly distributed threats like al Qaeda, threats that require the use of international cooperation, particularly in the area of law enforcement.



Lorelei Kelly
Washington, DC

The Nanny Diaries

I laughed so hard at Andrew Ferguson's "The Net Nanny State" (April 26) that I logged on to *www.govbenefits.gov* myself to see the government programs for which I am eligible. What I found made me envious. I answered all the questions, and yet I was told I could receive the largesse of only 14 government programs—far short of the "Ferguson Fifty-three." After I answered the questions as I would if I were a homeless drug addict, however, I did manage to get into the thirties, but that was still far short of my goal.

My favorite question on *www.govbenefits.gov* asks, "Are you are a coal minor [sic]?" Since I am over 18 years old, I couldn't quite convince myself to answer "yes," although I bet I would've gotten extra credit if I had.

Rick Riedmiller
Loveland, OH

Spainkillers

Christopher Caldwell describes Europe's disinclination to defend itself from militant Islam in "Zapatero's Spain" well (May 10). What he misses, however, is that the latest actions by Zapatero's government may be simply the internationalization of a recent Anglo-European tradition.

For example, Britain's 1953 Prevention of Crime bill outlawed the carrying, except in the most imminent and threatening circumstances, of any article "intended by the person having it with him for [causing harm to someone] by him." The Criminal Law of 1967 set a "reasonable" standard for the use of force, and case law has reached the point where using a toy gun to deter housebreakers results in criminal charges. Both laws typify modern European jurisprudence.

In other words, no one should have been surprised at Spain's decision to withdraw from Iraq. The more surprising thing is that the British haven't.

William J. Durr
Cornwallville, NY

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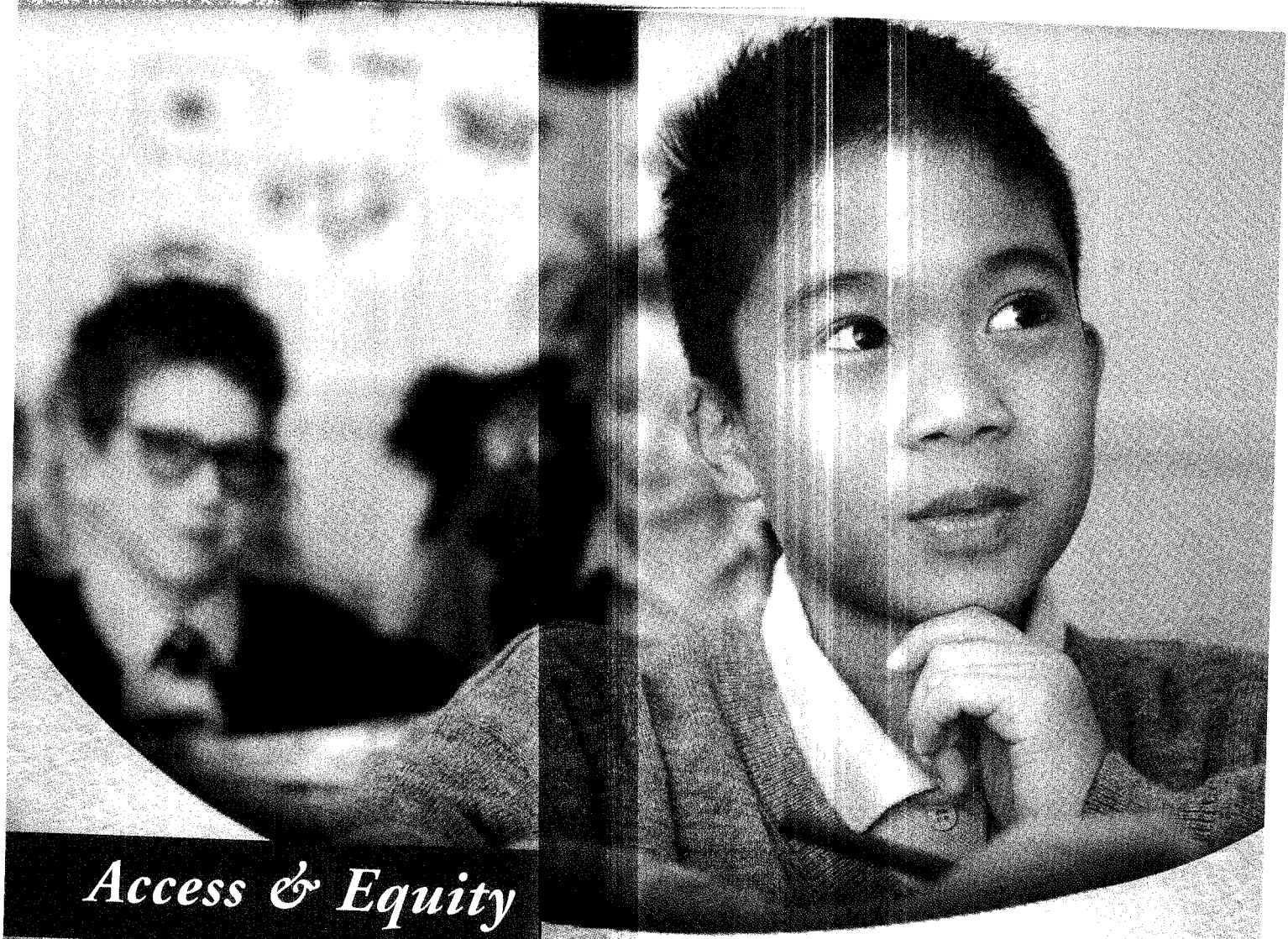

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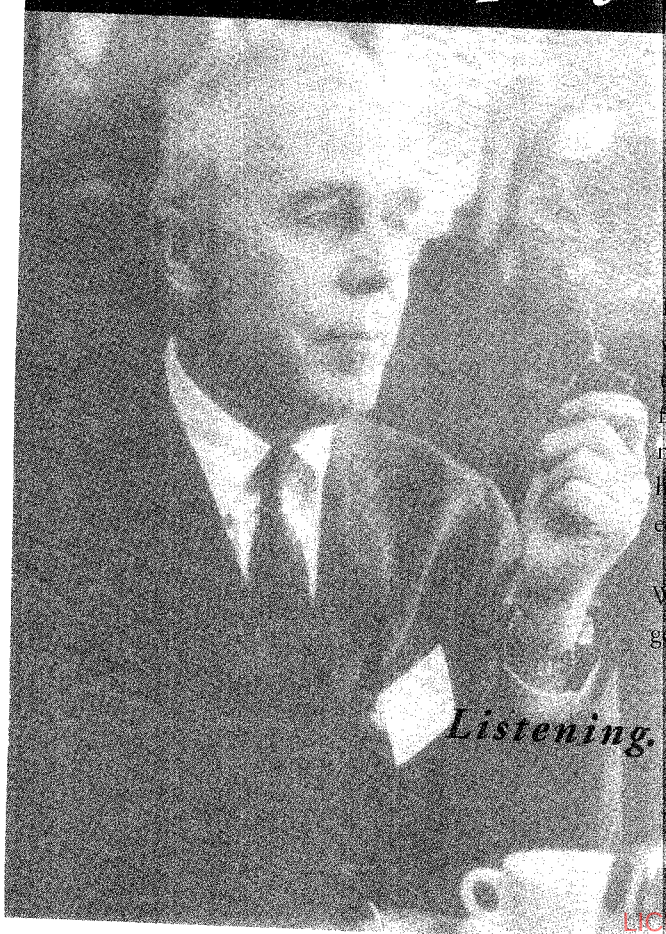

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"SPIRIT OF THE FREE"
By Michael Chain

I was cold and wet and seasick—
Lord I hate LCVTs—
When the gate came down
all hell broke loose,
And I crawled up on the beach
I could hear them 18-inchers,
They were layin' down the law,
And I'm still there
in the blood and sand
That day at Omaha

We were ten clicks out of nowhere
Humpin' boonies on our rounds,
When we stumbled onto Charlie
Climbin' up from underground.
It was hand-to-hand and bayonets,
We were only in our teens,
As a hundred '47s faced
Our dozen M-16s.

Mogadishu down to Baghdad,
I'm the guy who stands his ground,
With his finger on the trigger
When all hell is comin' down.
Got a feelin' I'm not goin' home,
But I don't give a damn.
If I had to do it over—
I'd do it all again.

I have died for you before
And I will die for you again,
I sat next to you in high school
And I dated your best friend.
I'm the guy you didn't notice,
I'm a picture on TV,
I'm a name engraved in marble,
I'm the spirit of the free.

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the weekly Standard

Of Mice and Men

"Are you a man or a mouse? Squeak up." Forty years ago, I thought this playground taunt witty. It isn't, really, but it seems apt right now. We're certainly hearing a lot of squeaking.

Not from the American people. They—including American women—are behaving like men. They supported the president when he decided we had to go to war to remove Saddam. They have been critical of the president's management of the war where appropriate, especially of the postwar war, so they are wavering on his reelection. But they have repudiated candidates who wanted to cut and run from Iraq, they have ignored demagogic attempts to assign blame for 9/11 and to peddle conspiracy theories about the war, and they haven't been panicked by the occasional (or even frequent) bad news from the front.

Some war supporters, having previously written eloquently of America's generational commitment, now want to throw in the towel.

The elites are something else. It can't be said that the left has suddenly begun squeaking, because that's its normal state. But the mainstream media have outdone themselves, spending the last two weeks treating the abuse of prisoners by Americans as the biggest story of the war. And some war supporters, having previously written eloquently of America's generational commitment, the magnitude of the cause, and the transformational nature of 9/11, have now decided that a few months of bungling by the Bush administration require throwing in the towel on the central front in the war on terror.

And the Bush administration? It's natural that they are somewhat disheartened. It would be good if this led them to rethink some of their decisions. But above all, they should be redoubling their efforts to win the war. They shouldn't be curling into a fetal position, hoping to survive the blows of political opponents, and praying that John Kerry will be so bad a candidate that their guy will stagger through.

It is true that the mistakes of the past year have had a dispiriting cumulative effect. It is true that it is harder to recover now than it would have been a year ago. But we can't win if we don't apply ourselves anew to trying to win. Reasonable people can differ about what steps must be taken, but here are just a few of the many that could be.

(1) The president announces that, with respect to the prison abuse scandal, he has ordered that legal proceedings move ahead as quickly as possible—and that until they have run their course, he and his cabinet will have no more to say. There will be no more apologies. And, the president could add, Sen. Kennedy's comment that Saddam's torture chambers have "reopened under new management, U.S. management" is beneath contempt.

(2) The president orders Secretary Rumsfeld to send 50,000 more troops to Iraq to win the war. He also orders the secretary of defense to submit a plan to increase the overall size of our armed forces so that it is sufficient for the tasks ahead in the global war on terror.

(3) The president orders combatant commanders to move aggressively to see to it that killers of Americans are killed, that those who aid those killers are held responsible, and that the insurgents are crushed. He might add that any site where Americans are attacked will be regarded as a combat zone, and anyone who chooses to go there to celebrate will be subject to attack.

(4) The president announces that we will accelerate the Iraqi elections, advancing them to this fall, to make clear our commitment to aiding the Iraqis in establishing a real democracy.

(5) The president cancels his own political travel for the next few weeks to engage in an intensive review with his top advisers of our strategy and tactics, to ensure that we are on, or can get onto, a path to decisive victory.

If the president spoke this way and his administration acted in concert—if the president led the country as a fully engaged commander in chief—surely the American people would prefer this to the squeaking of his opponents. If not, then he, and we, are headed to defeat in any event. But at least this path would give victory a chance.

—*William Kristol*

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Rumsfeld's Vietnam Syndrome

Will casualty-aversion cost Bush the election?

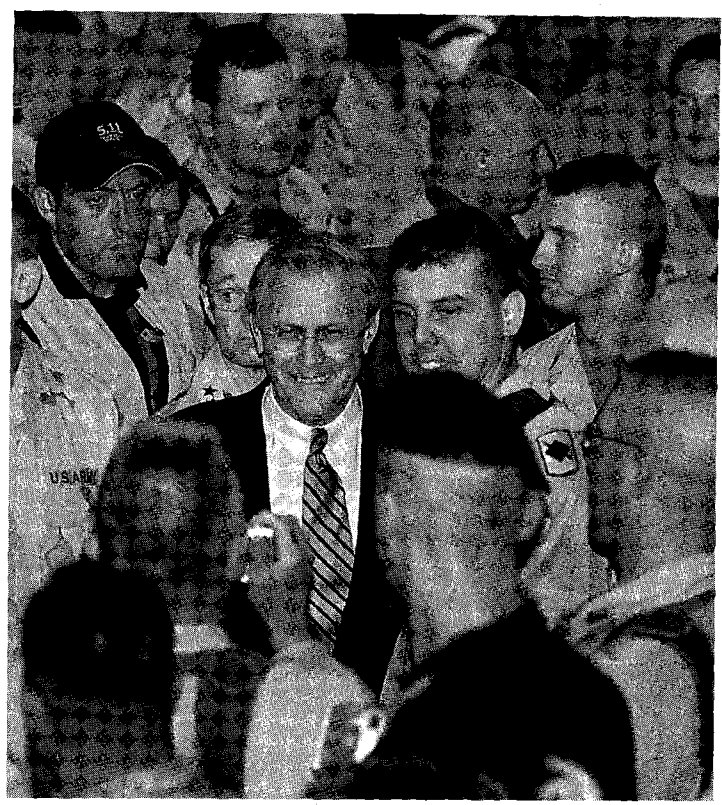
BY JEFFREY BELL

FOR GEORGE W. BUSH, it would be bizarre if the most loyal and gifted member of his cabinet were to be the instrument of his defeat in November 2004. Recent developments on the Iraq front of the war on terror make such thoughts about Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld harder and harder to put aside.

No, it isn't about the prison scandal. Bad as this is, a successful execution of the president's Iraq strategy will in the end render Abu Ghraib an ugly sideshow.

The danger to the Bush presidency lies in the decision to pull the Marines back from attacking Sunni terrorists in Falluja, and the growing probability that similar avoidance of U.S. military risk is being adopted in other parts of Iraq. This sends the worst conceivable signal to Iraqi advocates of democracy and would-be political leaders.

The incentives are simple, and widely understood: Take seriously the Bush strategy of democratization, supporting the occupation and sticking to peaceful advocacy, and you become an immediate candidate for assassination. Take up the weapons of terrorism, have a measure of success in the arts of murder and desecration, and the United States will soon be negotiating to put you in charge of "security" in your area—even if you are a former Baathist general still sporting a Saddam-style moustache.



Reuters / Landov / David Hume Kennerly

Rumsfeld in Baghdad, May 13

Why is this happening? Is President Bush a Machiavellian, giving idealists the rhetoric and quietly awarding Huntington-style cultural chauvinists and Arab oligarchs the substance? Such massive deception is neither likely nor even very plausible for a president who doggedly continues to defend his vision of democratic renewal in the Arab and Islamic world, in the face of humiliating setbacks and ridicule from Mideast experts. If Bush were the sort of president willing to tolerate pleasant lies in search of favorable editorials, he long since would have resumed the endless farce of U.S.-led peace negotiations with Yasser Arafat.

Nor does the Falluja incentive system seem to stem from any grassroots revolt of the uniformed military against the Bush policy. By most accounts, the Marine units in Falluja were eager to crush the terrorists who had killed Americans and desecrated their bodies and were unhappy at the order to pull back. Besides, no defense secretary in memory has exercised greater control over ground execution than the brilliant, hands-on Rumsfeld. He may not be loved by the uniforms, but they know better than to try to sabotage the man who ordered the headlong rush to Baghdad a year ago, and was proven right by the astounding results.

A clue to what may be going on is Rumsfeld's recent, and rare, confession of unpleasant surprise at the number of U.S. casualties taking place a full year after the fall of Baghdad. Rumsfeld was an elective politician in the 1960s. His first stint as defense secretary began nearly three decades ago, just a few months after the North Vietnamese conquest of South Vietnam. It is a commonplace that the Vietnam experience turned many American hawks into doves or isolationists. Less well understood is what it did to those American hawks who never stopped being hawkish.

Hawks who wanted the United States to be able to act militarily after Vietnam created the movement called military reform. They fought successfully to end the draft. Their version of a modernized military emphasized

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technology, speed, and surprise, often involving airpower, rather than frontal infantry assaults. Again and again, they were proven right, never more so than in Rumsfeld's dazzling war plans for Afghanistan and Iraq.

What these hawks' military success obscured is a political analysis that is deeply flawed. Their premise, often unstated, is that U.S. public opinion turned against involvement in Vietnam because of persistently high U.S. casualties. But the truth is that public support for the war held up long after casualties became high (far higher, of course, than those we're seeing now). It began to falter when political elites faltered in their will to prevail, culminating in the visible demoralization of Lyndon Johnson and his administration in the wake of the Tet offensive of early 1968.

It is often recalled, as an oddity, that the breakthrough Eugene McCarthy vote in New Hampshire in March 1968 consisted more of hawks than doves. But that McCarthy vote was no oddity. The turn against the Johnson-Humphrey war strategy, and the ultimate passing of presidential dominance to the GOP, was not due to the doves, most of whom wound up voting for Humphrey in November 1968. The center of gravity of American politics shifted because of Vietnam hawks voting their frustration at the loss of a simple, understandable mission.

Rumsfeld may never have fully believed in the president's democratic mission in Iraq. That may have made it a simple decision to choose, in Falluja and perhaps elsewhere, to put a cap on American casualties at the expense of achieving decisive victory over antidemocratic and anti-American forces. But that sense of a loss of mission, not the level of U.S. casualties, is the gravest threat so far to the Bush war strategy, and thus to the Bush presidency.

As for Rumsfeld, it is at least interesting that amid his trials, he is reading about Ulysses S. Grant, a war leader who never confused loyalty to his president with the avoidance of casualties. ♦

A White House Divided

The Bush administration's civil war.

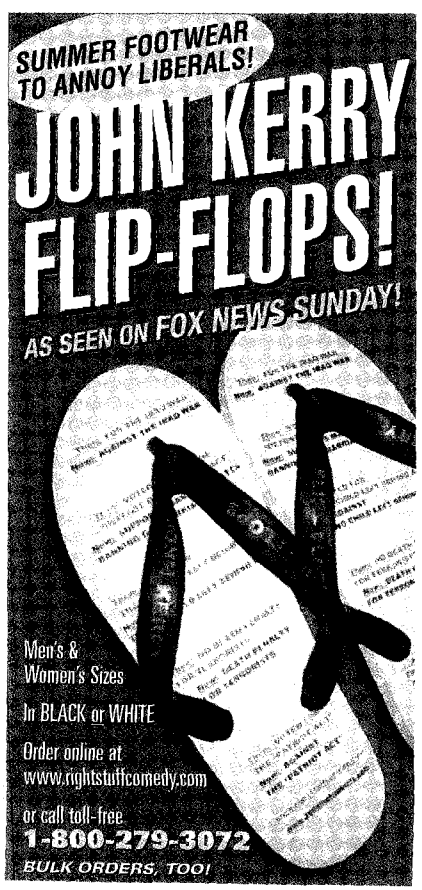
BY FRED BARNES

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has lived hard, and it shows. Democrats demand the firing of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and few Republicans in Congress rush to his defense. Pro-Rumsfeld noises come mostly from the White House. Without informing the White House, Attorney General John Ashcroft releases memos that damage the credibility of a member of the 9/11 Commission, Jamie Gorelick. This occurs days before President Bush is interviewed by the commissioners, including Gorelick, creating what aides believe is an awkward situation for the president. Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff trashes the Bush foreign policy in a magazine interview. At daily briefings, the White House press secretary looks scared of the media.

The administration is like a person who packs a lifetime of work, struggle, and tension into a few furious years. Bush and his team have experienced the crises of two, three, four administrations in less than four years. White House aides can list them: two wars, a recession, 9/11, an anthrax attack, three battles to cut taxes, two scandals, a flip-flop in Senate control, fights over Medicare, education, judges. Constant crisis mode takes a toll. One slightly ailing Bush aide says the "constant pounding" by administration critics has caused his sickness. He's joking, but just barely. Bush has been assailed enough for several presidential terms.

Under the circumstances, the administration has held up reasonably well. It hasn't crumbled or become irrelevant, but it is more mistake-prone. It insisted that the Pentagon's intelligence chief, Stephen Cambone, appear last week at a congressional hearing with General Antonio Taguba, who investigated prison abuse in Iraq. The result was an unnecessary public disagreement between Cambone and Taguba. When Bush spoke recently in Nassau County on Long Island, the White House said the county was second in the number of victims at the World Trade Center. Who was first? The White

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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House couldn't say—an obvious question and a small but telling failure to have the answer.

The administration has changed. Accused of arrogance, it has become more humble. In his remarks on the National Day of Prayer on May 6, the president said Americans "do not presume to equate God's purposes with any purpose of their own." Without mentioning America's intervention in Iraq, he said: "A humble heart is not an indifferent heart. We cannot be neutral in the face of injustice or cruelty or evil. God is not on the side of any nation, yet we know He is on the side of justice." Bush, by the way, scaled back his humor at the White House Correspondents Dinner on May 1 after being zinged by Democrats for an innocuous joke about weapons of mass destruction at an earlier Washington banquet.

When Rumsfeld made a surprise visit to Iraq last week, he sounded anything but triumphal. He likened rough times for American troops in postwar Iraq to the dark days of the Civil War for President Lincoln's administration. "Can we win? Is it worth it? Those are big questions," Rumsfeld said. He told soldiers that "there will be plenty of potholes in the road, and mistakes will get made, and people will have to be picked up and put back on that path towards" a democratic Iraq. "But one day you're going to look back and you're going to be proud of your service and you're going to say it was worth it."

For now, there are doubts about Iraq—not opposition or criticism—even among the uniformed military, a pro-Bush stronghold. And the bumpy stretch in Iraq has made the president less of a commanding political presence in Washington. Bush campaigned for Republican senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania in a bitter primary battle. Specter declared himself a Bush Republican, but when he returned to Washington he voted against the administration on a measure to reform the way overtime pay is applied in the workplace. The measure lost.

Bush himself seems the least worn down by facing crisis upon crisis. His aides attribute this equanimity to his decision-making style and temperament. Bush likes dealing with big issues, not "smallball" as he calls less weighty matters. He makes decisions easily, without handwringing or excessive deliberation. Afterwards, he doesn't second-guess himself. That he's not dogged by doubts has been cited by critics in the media as a weakness. And this criticism is often coupled with complaints about Bush's Christian faith, which many in the press resent. In truth, Bush's certainty, whatever its source, is his strength. Would it really be preferable to have another Bill Clinton in the White House, making decisions on Iraq, unmaking them, then making them again and perhaps again? The answer is no.

Rumsfeld's Civil War analogy—he's reading a book about Ulysses S. Grant and the war—has a revealing insight. He noted the "unbelievable criticism" of Lincoln and his generals. "But they were steadfast," he said. Bush has been steadfast, too, but an emerging conventional wisdom in Washington suggests this hasn't helped Bush politically. Poll numbers on job approval and public sentiment about the direction of the country are seen as precursors to losing the election on November 2. Lincoln was in trouble at this point in 1864. The capture of Atlanta by General William Tecumseh Sherman saved him. A dramatic breakthrough in Iraq may be needed now to save Bush. ♦

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An Orgy of Anti-Americanism

They hate us. They really, really hate us.

BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

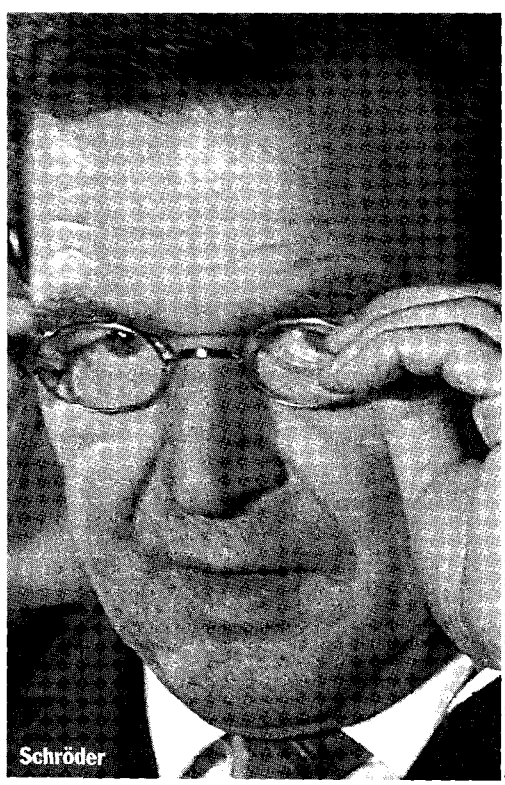
Berlin

RECENTLY, the center-right daily *Die Welt* placed on its front-page a large color photograph of a tall African-American soldier, outfitted in full combat gear, standing in front of a jail cell at the Abu Ghraib prison. Stretching a delicate hand through the bars of her cell, a diminutive female prisoner looks to be pleading for mercy. "Bush Supports Rumsfeld: 'Courageous Führer,'" reads the headline. Mind you, Germans use other words for "leader" today and avoid "der Führer"—except apparently for Herr Rumsfeld.

The next day, the liberal *Süddeutsche Zeitung* showed another female prisoner from Abu Ghraib on page one. As she peers through the bars, the headline reads, "A Glance Out Toward Freedom." Opines the centrist Berlin daily *Tagesspiegel*: "America must now prove to the world that it is different from the dictatorships it is fighting against." That's becoming popular sentiment.

Remember the moral equivalence that infected democracies during the Cold War? It's back. Part of America's problem is self-inflicted. I honestly believe that the administration's public diplomacy has been so bad that if America suddenly discovered a cure for cancer, we'd probably botch the marketing and trigger a worldwide boycott.

But the mess over Abu Ghraib is also firing up anti-Americanism. Here in Germany, I argued the case for war against Saddam Hussein on talk shows and in newspaper columns. The hate mail is back and now the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* has called for me publicly to apologize. Those who never cared a lick about democracy in Iraq are out in hordes again, this time telling Americans to get out of Iraq so democracy and rule of law can have a chance.



Schröder

Reuters / Landov / Charles Platiau

Do not think, though, that Europe's current state of mind is merely caused by anti-Americanism, or, for that matter, that this is just an "Old Europe" thing. Peruse the Polish press and you see things like this from the centrist *Rzeczpospolita*, up until now a staunch ally on Iraq: "The administration in Washington has not only led the West into a war it cannot win, it has also twisted the concept of democracy into something quite foreign." Stalwarts like Solidarity intellectual Adam Michnik have been falling on their swords. Michnik asks whether Poland should not rethink its role in Iraq if tortures by Saddam executioners "are to be replaced with tortures by U.S. soldiers turned executioners."

Nor is it just Abu Ghraib. Friends want explanations why enlisting old Saddam generals will make Iraq a better place. Don't we need more troops? Do we (finally) have a coherent and convincing strategy for winning the peace?

President Bush once tried to draw a distinction between Bad Old Europe (France) and Not-So-Bad Old Europe (Germany). The president said he could understand German opposition to the Iraq war. Germans are still very much pacifists. The president also told a senior German executive that his problem was with Schröder, not the rest of Germany. I hope he and his top advisers do not really believe this.

Look at the German opposition. Another front-page headline recently in *Die Welt*: "CDU Governor Müller: Iraq War was Wrong." A spokesman for the Christian Democrats says that his party "must condemn American human rights violations just as clearly as the crimes of Saddam Hussein." Bundestag member Willy Wimmer, a former senior defense official in Helmut Kohl's government, has launched his latest round of scurrilous attacks. Before the war, Wimmer divided his time between Baghdad, where he consulted with Baathist officials, and nightly talk shows here in Germany, where he berated America for aggression against Iraq and devious strategies to keep Europe divided and weak.

Jürgen Todenhöfer, a former CDU

Jeffrey Gedmin is director of the Aspen Institute Berlin.

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Bundestag member turned author and media commentator, was recently given a full page by the *Financial Times Deutschland* for his own diatribes. "Is the West's antiterror more humane than the terrorism we are fighting against?" Todenhöfer asked. Whose bombs, he writes, "pulverized the children of Iraq and Afghanistan?"

Now, Wimmer is a backbencher and crackpot. Todenhöfer is a flake. But Mathias Döpfner, the 41-year-old publisher of *Springer*, traditionally a bastion of pro-American sentiment, warned in an essay several weeks ago that anti-Americanism was flourishing in Germany, including in "national-conservative and culturally conservative circles."

Just to let you know how weird things can get, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has now warned the opposition of exploiting anti-American sentiment for cheap political gain. That's rich. But such is the zeitgeist. A popular new book in Germany is Eric Frey's *Schwarzbuch USA*—Black Book USA. It is a 497-page catalogue of American crimes throughout history, beginning with the "annihilation of the Indians." This sells. Michael Moore has become America's ambassador to Europe.

Get beyond Abu Ghraib—get beyond Iraq—and you see we have a problem. It has been long in coming, and a President Kerry, genuflecting before the altar of multilateralism, will not solve it either. In the Cold War, we had a strategy. But today in the war of ideas and the fight for hearts and minds we seem to have unilaterally disarmed, as Joshua Muravchik puts it. What happens if Germany becomes more like France? If a future CDU chancellor resembles Jacques Chirac? If we lose Poland? Or if Bush's ally José-María Aznar was a Spanish aberration? What if the U.K. joins the euro, approves the European Constitution, and slides closer to a Gaullist Paris and Berlin?

Bet on this. Unless we fight anti-Americanism and give our friends more to work with, a conventional wisdom will harden: that the war against Saddam was wrong, preemption is unacceptable, the Greater Middle East Initiative is dead, the U.N. is always right, and American strength is the world's number one problem. That's all woolly-headed nonsense, you say. Who cares about the foolish Europeans? Wait till the coming crisis with Iran and United Europe stands against us. ♦

The Incredible Shrinking Army

It's even worse than you think.

BY FREDERICK W. KAGAN

FOR MONTHS, it has been obvious that the United States needs more forces in Iraq, and that the Army is not large enough to sustain even the current level of deployment in Iraq. The Pentagon, however, has consistently refused to face reality. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, abetted by the senior military leadership, has instead been playing a shell game with American troops. The decision some weeks ago to keep 135,000 soldiers in Iraq was described as an "increase," because the administration had been planning to send 20,000 of them home. The same Orwellian logic is being applied once again, this time to the Army as a whole.

Bills before Congress now propose "increasing" the Army by "30,000" troops over the next three or four years, but this "increase" is just as ephemeral as the "increase" in American troops in Iraq. The Army's current authorized end-strength equals 482,000 active soldiers. The crisis in Iraq and the war on terror in general have already led Congress to allow the Army to maintain a somewhat higher strength and finish this fiscal year with 501,300 soldiers. The congressional proposals would grant a temporary three-year increase in authorized end-strength to 512,000. It is true that the overall difference in authorized end-strengths is 30,000 soldiers. It is also true that the Army desperately needs congressional approval to fill its ranks even at the current level, since more than 6,000 soldiers are being kept in the Army only because of the "stop-loss" now in place. As soon as that stop-loss is lifted, many of those soldiers will leave. What is not true, however, is that the congressional proposals will increase the number of soldiers now in the army by 30,000. The actual increase will be fewer than 10,700 bodies, gained gradually over the course of several years. This measure is a trivial palliative compared with the Army's actual needs.

Worse yet, rumors are now swirling that one of two maneuver squadrons (battalions) of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment will soon deploy from Fort Irwin, California, to Afghanistan, and two of the three companies of the 1st Battalion of the 509th Infantry Regiment will travel from Fort Polk, Louisiana, to Iraq. These units are the permanent "opposing forces," or OPFOR, at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center respectively. Their sole mission is to prepare other Army units for deployment to Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever the nation needs them. Throughout the year, units from all over the Army go to the NTC and the JRTC and run field exercises trying to defeat the OPFOR in "laser-tag" sim-

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ulations using real weapons and equipment. The training those units receive is only as good as the OPFOR makes it, since soldiers would learn little fighting an incompetent opponent.

Over the years, these units have performed their job superbly, and they are one of the major reasons for the high quality of Army forces in the field today. Both units have served as OPFORs for more than a decade, and they have become the premier training units in the world. Units replacing them will not be able to match their level of skill and experience for a long time. As a result, the level of training in the Army will be degraded, and Army forces deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan will be less well prepared. This decision is incredibly shortsighted. It mortgages the future to pay for past and present failings. It is symptomatic, however, of the sort of damage the Army is suffering on a day-to-day basis because of the inadequacy of its end-strength.

The question is often asked, Can we really build up the Army now through a volunteer system? Would we not have to restore the draft to increase the force? The answer is that we can certainly recruit more soldiers. Amazingly, recruitment has not suffered significantly from the war or the impositions on soldiers today. But additional troops will not be picked up instantly. It takes time to recruit and train new soldiers. This is why we should make haste. The longer we delay, the longer it will take before any relief comes into sight for our weary and overworked soldiers.

Instead of providing for such relief, congressmen, often claiming to be bold, are proposing budgetary band-aids, while the secretary of defense justifies their claims by steadfastly objecting even to those band-aids. This behavior is difficult to comprehend in an administration that took office promising that help was on the way to a military starved by the Clinton administration. Yet even today, with the Army at the breaking point and Iraq on the edge of catastrophe, there is no help coming from the Bush administration. ♦

The Wheels of Military Justice . . .

The pitfalls of speedy court martial trials.

BY BARRY D. HALPERN

THE UPCOMING COURT MARTIAL trials in the Abu Ghraib detainee abuse cases may have consequences neither intended nor anticipated by the military and civilian authorities who are pushing for a quick and decisive resolution of the affair. These trials—the first is scheduled to begin May 19 in Baghdad—will not be drumhead proceedings with preordained guilty verdicts. Unless the investigations that preceded the public disclosures of abuses result in early plea agreements, the cases may get ugly, complicated, and tedious. Especially as the trials seem to be proceeding hastily. If military authorities have followed normal procedures for processing serious cases, the Abu Ghraib prosecutions are at about the stage of the Kobe Bryant case, which is months away from trial.

The old post-Vietnam saw that "military justice is to justice as military music is to music" is long out of date. Today's military justice system operates under a well-developed body of federal law, with procedures and prosecution standards that largely mirror civilian practice. The Judge Advocate General (JAG) departments of the service branches attract and retain well-credentialed professionals who are both lawyers and military officers—in that order. Military trial lawyers come from some of the country's best law schools and are well trained at JAG schools and civilian post-graduate programs. They often have more trial experience than their civilian colleagues, and they're every bit as zealous in the representation of their clients. (At Guantanamo Bay, military lawyers ignored Department of Defense protocol in petitioning civilian federal courts on behalf of their internee clients.)

Military defendants enjoy essentially the same rights as civilian defendants. The Uniform Code of Military Justice provides defendants with military counsel (often selected by the defendant), access to civilian defense counsel, broad discovery rights assuring access to the prosecution's exculpatory information, and multiple levels of judicial and administrative appeal. Military juries, composed of service members, bring to the courtroom stronger educational backgrounds than a typical civilian jury and, in most instances, a professional ethic that assures adherence to the law regardless of the presumed expectations of the commander who convened the court martial.

With all of these tools available to defense counsel, the Abu Ghraib trials may generate more fireworks than O.J. and Martha. A race to the courtroom to showcase the "swift justice" promised by the president could have unpredictable and potentially damaging consequences. Unless the military prosecutors have ironclad cases or have secured plea deals, the Abu Ghraib courtrooms could become yet another vexing campaign in an already tough war. Dismissals or acquittals resulting from procedural errors would hardly enhance the world's impression of the American system of justice.

Consider the serious challenges facing prosecutors and senior officers

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throughout the chain of command. The glare of the world's media will limit the disciplinary choices. Administrative discharges under less than honorable conditions, which would normally resolve some of the cases, will invite cries of a cover-up. "Non-judicial punishment," a trial-avoiding option in military law, might have been effective in dealing with marginally involved participants, but the relatively light penalties it allows probably won't play well in the United States or the Middle East.

All this leaves prosecutors in a tough situation. Trials in a war zone pose security, intelligence, and public disclosure problems seldom faced by civilian lawyers and judges. The military justice system is nevertheless expected to function efficiently, fairly, and quickly. But the outcome is highly unlikely to be made into a tidy drama starring Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson. When relatively low ranking enlisted personnel are thrust into the center of a media storm, neither they nor their lawyers are going to acquiesce in a double-time march toward easy convictions.

The defense teams will have much to discuss with the military judge about the location of the trial in the midst of a hostile population stirred up by florid media coverage and shocked expressions of outrage from every corner of the military establishment. The extraordinary level of pretrial publicity will be grist for defense motions that could untrack the prosecution. The defense lawyers may also demand the sworn testimony of senior military officers at various command levels and civilian intelligence officers whose roles and responsibilities at the prison seem to baffle even the Pentagon's highest ranking officers. Things could really get interesting if recently released detainees testify.

Peter Steiner

In cases as politically charged as these, the impartiality of the military justice system will also be tested, as the interests of justice are precariously balanced against the exigencies of war under intense media scrutiny. Whether the military justice system can function effectively in this unprecedented atmosphere remains to be seen.

Let us grant that there is much about these cases that we won't know until the trials start. It may turn out that the prosecution has been punctilious in ways that will validate the Defense Department's handling of the Abu Ghraib affair in the months before the allegations of abuse became a worldwide spectacle. Although the Pentagon has been condemned for disclosing so little, so slowly, the court martial trials may reveal a careful and deliberate investigation conducted quietly to comply with legal requirements and build solid cases against the abusers. If the prosecution's evidence, compiled since January, anticipates and overwhelms the defense positions, the trials may proceed smoothly with evidence and testimony that could have been tainted and inadmissible if revealed in advance.

Either way, those hoping for the catharsis of quick and decisive prosecutions are likely to be frustrated by the military justice system's comprehensive procedural safeguards. Although the pace of investigation and prosecutions may seem painfully slow to the political classes, speeding the process and disclosing evidence prematurely in hopes of catching a public relations break would have been the worst approach of all. Even now, rushing the cases to trial to bring closure to the story could be a serious mistake. The last thing we need are missteps by the investigators, command authorities, and the military prosecutors that cast doubt on the verdicts. ♦

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Journalists and Their Fallacies

How the world doesn't work.

BY DAN DUNSKY

SINCE KOSOVO IN 1999—through 9/11, Afghanistan, and Iraq—I've noticed, as the producer of a television program on international affairs, three common assumptions that cloud the minds of some otherwise good journalists and academics charged with reporting and explaining major events as they unfold. Reliance on these assumptions—all of them seemingly designed to help one escape the hard work of sifting through evidence and thinking through ideas—explains the way stories like the war in Iraq are framed and simplified in the media and for the public.

The first assumption is that universal fairness, if achieved, would result in world peace. One is not surprised when such sentiments are uttered by children. Around Christmas, my son's kindergarten class was asked how to make the world more peaceful. "Talk nicely to each other," said one kid. "Be everyone's friend," said another.

If we tried hard enough, the children were saying, we could do away with conflict by just getting along. A recent email from the head of an English think tank devoted to global cooperation expressed this notion perfectly: "Time has come for all the world's politicians to come together. . . . The solution of eradicating terrorism can only be achieved by building a new world" where everyone is equal.

This utopian tautology—only when there are no problems will there be no problems—ignores the fundamental question of why conflict exists in the first place. "We need to get beyond the them and us, the good guys and the bad guys, and seek a genuinely collective response," urged the *Guardian*, following the 3/11 attacks in Madrid. But a world without *us*'s and *them*'s is inconceivable. And the lesson of Madrid is clear and simple: Well-meaning appeals to "collective" understanding cannot do away with the profound cultural differences that are now exploding in conflict.

The second common fallacy I've come across is that "my country"—in my case, Canada, though it applies to some others—is a nation apart. Somehow, it can stand outside the turbulent currents of contemporary international events.

Quite a few of my countrymen see Canada's (alleged) neutrality as a sign of our longstanding "idealism." Any decent history book will contradict this fiction, but the fantasy that we are, and will continue to be, neutral on the world's stage persists. There was no overwhelming majority here either for or against joining the Iraq war. Consequently, the government did not feel compelled to come down firmly on either side. This ambiguity may be nothing more than self-interest. Or it may be a window on our own cowardice in the face of today's security threats.

A few days after voters in Spain elected a new prime minister—a mere three days after bomb attacks killed 191 people in Madrid—a young Spaniard told the *New York Times* that "maybe the Socialists will get our troops out of Iraq, and al Qaeda will forget about Spain, so we will be less frightened." A Canadian columnist recently urged our new prime minister to "keep your Canadian distance" from the United States. "Kow-towing to [Bush] and doing his bidding in the Middle East and elsewhere will only bring you grief." Such sentiments are not the stuff of principled policy differences, but a calculated effort to stand outside the history that is being written today.

Bad Assumption Number Three: The world is divided into strong and weak. Being weak is a source of virtue. Being strong is suspect.

The United States is accused of being in Iraq (and Afghanistan) to control oil, to enhance its own power, and/or to subjugate friendless, defenseless Muslims. Muslims "are treated with contempt and dishonor," said outgoing Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad last October. "Our religion is denigrated. Our holy places desecrated. Our countries are occupied. Our people starved and killed."

However, as Bill Clinton recently pointed out, between 1991 and 1999, the United States freed Kuwait, intervened in Somalia, resolved the Bosnian conflict, and went to war for Kosovo's Albanians. In each case, the United States helped Muslims and did so (except for the Gulf War) despite the absence of any traditional national interest requirement.

The David-and-Goliath lens was similarly used to distort the fierce battle of Jenin in 2002. "Rarely, in more than a decade of war reporting from Bosnia, Chechnya, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, have I seen such deliberate destruction, such disrespect for human life," wrote the *Times* of London's Janine di Giovanni. When the deaths of 32 to 38 armed Palestinians and 14 to 20 Palestinian civilians—not to mention 23 Israeli soldiers—are compared to the tens of thousands who were raped, mutilated, or killed in those other conflicts, something other than clear-eyed analysis is going on.

Some editorializing on the prisoner abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison

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reveals this same tendency. Salim Lone, the former communications director of the United Nations mission in Baghdad, recently wrote that "Iraqi fury will, in fact, be uncontrollable if the infinitely more depraved images circulating on the Internet of what was done to women prisoners are authentic and get wider publication." There are no excuses for the sadistic acts of sexual humiliation and torture committed at this notorious house of horrors, but the Abu Ghraib abuses in no way confer victimhood on all Iraqis. Yet, as victims, Lone suggests, Iraqis are entitled to react with uncontrolled fury. This infantilization of Iraqis and their reactions—collective, undifferentiated, irrational—unduly and tellingly simplifies a much more complicated reality.

By leaning on these dull and often meaningless assumptions, journalists betray a preference for simplicity and tidy lessons at the expense of reporting and analysis. Some of this distortion may stem from a desire among commentators to be on the side of peace and goodness, but it would be much easier to take seriously their hopes for a better world if they appeared ready to confront the messy one we have. ♦

From HillaryCare to KerryCare

Plus ça change . . .

BY DAVID GRATZER

SENATOR JOHN KERRY hasn't done much to distinguish himself on health care policy. A look at his voting record shows him to be hesitant on medical savings accounts, although not on tort lawyers' trashing HMOs, concerned about the long-term sustainability of Medicare, yet delighted to expand the entitlement—a pretty typical Democrat, but nothing more than that. In his twenty years in Congress, Senator Kerry has never made health care a priority, passing not a single bill in this area. *Candidate* Kerry, on the other hand, is just wild about health care and has made it the major domestic issue of his campaign.

Asked what his first act in office would be, Kerry told the Associated Press: "I will send to Congress a health care plan that stops spiraling costs, covers every child in America, and makes it possible for every American to get the same health care as any member of Congress."

Why the sudden interest in health care? For one thing, it's polling very well. A recent Fox News poll shows that the economy and health care are the biggest concerns to the American public. By contrast, only 9 percent of respondents listed terrorism as a major concern. Thus, last June, Kerry released a plan to overhaul American health care.

Since the collapse of HillaryCare, Democrats have avoided sweeping initiatives. Kerry, thus, proposes small ideas, and a whole lot of them. Most notable about his effort, however, is the price tag. So say even its supporters. Kenneth Thorpe, deputy assistant secretary of health and human services under Clinton, pegged the total bill to be $972 billion over ten years. "It's his single biggest program, spending-wise," notes Thorpe, "and his single biggest domestic priority." Thorpe, a professor at Emory University, did recently revise his estimate down to a mere $653 billion. But to reach this politically more convenient number, he had to suddenly discover incredible savings that would be brought about by disease prevention, computerization, and other magic to improve the bottom line of Kerry's plan.

Not only pricey, Kerry's proposal is big on promises. He hopes to cut in half the number of uninsured Americans, reduce the price tag of employee coverage by $1,000 per worker, and provide millions of children with insurance. His biggest idea is to "give every American access to the health care plan that the president and members of Congress already have." All federal employees are covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP), a program that allows each worker to choose from a menu of insurance choices. Kerry isn't proposing to expand FEHBP. Rather, he wants to set up another program, and then force insurers participating in FEHBP to cover those in the new insurance pool. Premiums would be community-rated (in other words, the same for everyone), a model of equity.

Kerry also wants to expand existing government programs to cover children in families whose incomes are up to 300 percent of the poverty level. He aims to help offset the high

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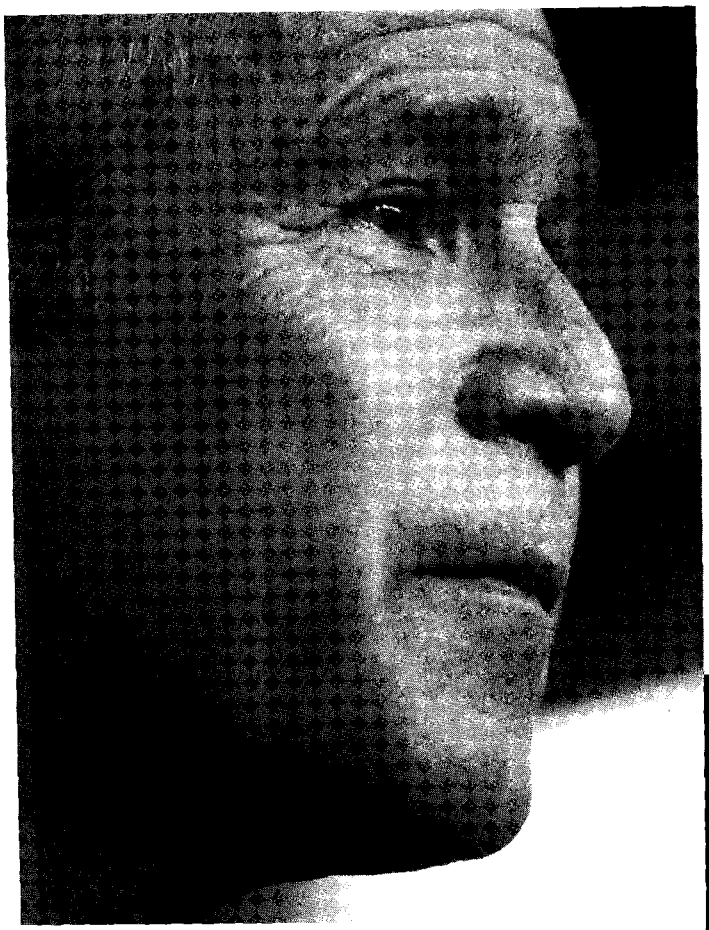

"A proper role for the government is to clear the regulatory hurdles so those who are going to make investments do so. Broadband is going to spread...so long as the regulatory burden is reduced."

President Bush, Remarks to American Association of Community Colleges. April 26, 2004

We Agree.

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Already, it is paying off.

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In a new world, where wireline, wireless, cable, satellite, and power line technologies are competing head-to-head, the President, and his FCC chairman, recognize that market-based competition is what will bring **America...The Future...*Faster.***

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cost of health insurance, offering to pay 75 percent of expenses above $50,000 if employers pass the insurance savings on to their employees. Add to the mix requirements (mandates) for wellness and disease management and tax credits for the uninsured. Finally, with an eye on Medicare's costs, he favors drug reimportation from Canada.

The basic problem with KerryCare is its impracticality. Take his commitment to provide federal employee-style health care to every interested individual or business. Since joining would be voluntary, the odds are that the older and less healthy would be overrepresented in the rolls. Further complicating matters is Kerry's plan to make the insurance community- rated. This attempt at equity would further attract older, sicker patients (they would get a relatively good price on the insurance), while those typically without insurance—healthy, young men and women with low incomes—would balk at the cost.

Voluntary purchase pools have been tried extensively at the state level, but the results haven't been encouraging. Researchers at the think tank RAND studied California, Connecticut, and Florida—states with the largest such efforts in the nation—and found the schemes had little impact on health coverage. In fact, in those three states, *fewer* businesses ended up offering insurance to their employees. State experimentation, observes health economist Tom Miller in *Regulation* magazine, shows that "low-risk individuals and employer groups are less likely to join, and they are most likely to leave early," making the pools unsustainable.

As to enrolling children from families earning up to three times the poverty limit, this is an overreaching commitment. Michael Cannon, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, observes that Kerry is "taking over a significant part of private health insurance." Likewise, covering all care over $50,000 undermines the basic point of insurance, that is, protecting people from rare and costly events. If anything, Kerry's proposal would nationalize catastrophic coverage. Couple this with his endorsement of drug reimportation, and it becomes clear that a Kerry administration would end up running and setting the price of much of American health care.

Republicans, thus, are presented with a short-term opportunity. Kerry has painted a trillion dollar target on his back. Consider that Kerry wants to include children in families earning about $47,000 a year at a time when states have difficulty paying for their present Medicaid commitments. Note also the emphasis on bureaucracy and government control. If Washington is in the business of covering catastrophic health expenses, how long before it manages all expenses?

John Kerry

Earl Kelleny

As an unintended consequence of wage and price controls during the Second World War, Americans began receiving their health insurance from their employers. Since the IRS ruled that health benefits would be tax-free, it was advantageous for employers and employees to have health benefits provided. A dollar spent on benefits, after all, went to an employee, whereas a dollar spent on salary might result in only 50 cents reaching the worker after taxes. By the late 1980s, more than 70 percent of employers in America offered health insurance, including nearly all large corporations. But the "high-tech, high-success" medical revolution has upped the cost of coverage. Employers have restricted health insurance choices or dropped coverage altogether. Today, 38 percent of insured employees have no choice of plans, and only 62 percent of businesses offer coverage. With health costs rising still and the American workforce becoming more mobile, employer-based health insurance is under siege.

Kerry sees these problems and proposes a trillion dollar bailout. Republicans could offer something better: putting health decisions in the hands of Americans. Last December, Congressional Republicans offered a first step in that direction by adding health savings accounts to the Medicare bill. But it's just a small step.

Compared with the rest of the economy, the health industry looks like the eastern bloc under Communist rule. *Medicine* has been transformed by high technology, while *the health industry* remains stuck in an earlier era of high cost and low satisfaction. Numerous problems result: Because of regulatory excess, many Americans can't find low cost health insurance; ownership laws allow hospital monopolies to flourish; Medicare rules and regulations end up creating a bizarre world of hospital and drug pricing for non-Medicare patients.

The idea of health savings accounts is simple. Outside of catastrophic expenses, people are empowered with tax-free dollars to purchase health care as they feel necessary. The hope is to create a market for health services, thereby reducing costs and increasing innovation. But that can never happen as long as health care

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remains the most regulated part of the economy. After all, does anyone remember consumer-oriented service in the airline industry before the deregulation of the 1970s?

While Kerry wants more bureaucrats and more money to help shore up the status quo, the White House can champion a different vision: empowering people. That means, yes, promoting health savings accounts, but it also means pushing further.

Many states have regulated health insurance so extensively that even basic plans are expensive. In fact, health savings accounts aren't available in Maryland, Hawaii, or New Jersey. Requiring states to deregulate insurance—which Congress could easily do by allowing out-of-state insurance purchases—would mean that all Americans have the opportunity to buy basic plans. Over the years, Medicare's administrators have written, literally, more than 100,000 pages of rules governing clinics, hospitals, and physicians. This mountain of paperwork means that time and energy are going to bureaucratic compliance instead of patient care. Furthermore, Medicare pricing (and insisting that it apply to everyone but managed care) means that competitive pricing doesn't exist for many services. Washington needs to cut the red tape.

Between state and federal ownership laws, hospitals are the only game in town for many surgeries and procedures. As an alternative, Congress can free providers to form specialty clinics, challenging hospital monopolies and allowing innovation in the delivery of care. Another reform to consider is significant tax credits for the uninsured (not employers), so that they can buy coverage, and tax equity for those purchasing health savings accounts. This agenda would collectively refurbish American health care.

Since the collapse of HillaryCare, the GOP has been largely on the defensive when it comes to health issues. Championing individual choice and competition could turn the health debate—and American medicine—in the right direction. ♦

Georgia on His Mind

George Soros's Potemkin revolution.

BY RICHARD W. CARLSON

AT THE VOICE OF AMERICA during the Cold War some of the most troublesome employees were those who broadcast daily to the Soviet Union and its satellite states, in Russian, Azeri, Georgian, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, and so on. These staffers were often émigrés—well-educated, sometimes understandably bitter men and women whose attitudes had been formed by a Communist political system in which errors in judgment or action brought disproportional punishment, while rewards could derive from deep, back-channel manipulation of appearances and an avoidance of responsibility. ("Deny everything, make counter-allegations" seemed the guideline in discussions with senior managers. "I didn't do it. He did!" the standard retort.)

Of the more than 50 VOA language services at that time, the most blustering and contentious, emanating a continuing, colorful, and aggressive hostility to management (accompanied by an ironic, bizarre willingness to grovel to tough, uncompromising leadership) was that which broadcast to the Soviet Republic of Georgia.

I was in Georgia last month, and it is still colorful and still difficult, a poor country, poorer even than Haiti, with a new president but the same culture—one that cultivates a swaggering, prideful masculinity in its leaders who, since the fall of the Soviet Union, have been lionized by the U.S. foreign policy establishment and the Western press but who just as quickly seem to morph from lion to demon.

A case in point is Eduard Shevardnadze, once the Soviet foreign minister, who was for more than a dozen years invariably described in the West as a stalwart friend of democracy and a liberal, honest fellow. Six months ago, he was ousted as the president of Georgia in a coup led by his young protégé, Mikhail Saakashvili, who is glorying in the same lavish treatment from the State Department and the media. They now paint *him* as honest, liberal, and democratic, while Shevardnadze is Bronx-cheered as corrupt and murderous, a brute who was forced from office by what Saakashvili (with an unerring eye for the sixties-sentimentality of the Western media) dubs "The Rose Revolution."

Late last fall, Saakashvili led thousands of "spontaneous" demonstrators, bused in from around Tbilisi, brandishing flowers as they invaded the president's palace. This was during the freezing Georgian winter when any roses not black and brittle had to be flown or trucked in, courtesy of the same bankroll that funded the fleet of rented buses for demonstrators: that of George Soros, the Hungarian-born billionaire and egotist. A former member of the Georgian Parliament said that in the three months before the "Rose Revolution," "from August through October, Soros spent $42 million ramping-up for the overthrow of Shevardnadze."

Soros has publicly committed himself to funding the "democratic" presidency of Mikhail Saakashvili, just as he has publicly committed himself

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and his money to the destruction of the presidency of George W. Bush, whom he has compared to Yasser Arafat and Hitler. Soros and the United Nations are paying the wages of all of Saakashvili's top government officials—ministers, deputies, the road police, and others—on the grounds that this will keep them from stealing. As if bribery and corruption were simply a problem of immediate financial need, not greed.

Shevardnadze's attempt to rig the November 2003 parliamentary elections was a handy catalyst for the coup, but it was already in the works. The previous summer Soros had flown Saakashvili and his followers to a seminar he sponsored in Belgrade on how to stage your own "Velvet Revolution." And perhaps Soros would deserve some credit—except for the undeniable fact that, ever since his anointing in a crooked election in January, Saakashvili has sounded more like a raging nationalist and authoritarian thug than a democrat strewing rose petals.

"It is democracy in a china shop," the *New York Times* reported on March 28. "A growing number of critics, though, say that the new president is exploiting his popularity to cut legal corners, violate human rights and silence opposition views." "Saakashvili's all-powerful party is getting into the habit of ignoring the law, or changing it, when it does not suit their purpose," reported Agence France-Presse.

Saakashvili, now 36, was an only child with an absent father. He was raised by a divorced, domineering, and ambitious mother, and his tough-talking Dutch-born wife, Sandra Roelof, appears to follow in that tradition. (Saakashvili married her in lower Manhattan in 1993 while he was attending Columbia for a year on a U.S. taxpayer-funded scholarship.) In February, Roelof gave an interview to a Dutch magazine for a breathless *Vanity Fair*-like profile headlined "Sandra Roelof's Fairy Tale: From a Zeeuws Girl to First Lady of Georgia." Roelof seems to have taken to Georgian politics:

Mikhail Saakashvili and Sandra Roelof

EPA / Landov / Zurab Kurtsekidze

> Georgia has produced strong leaders. Stalin, Beria, Gamsakhurdia. Even Shevardnadze, before he got addicted to power. They looked beyond Georgia. My husband does the same; he fits in the tradition. This country needs a strong hand. It is incredibly important that respect for authority returns. That laws are less frequently broken, that people simply pay their bills for once. There is hardly a sense of responsibility here. . . . I think my husband is the right person to frighten people. That is not to say it is immediately fascism or something. Should he develop extremist traits he will be alerted to that. All eyes are looking at us now.

What a roll call! Stalin's birthplace in Gori, Georgia, close to the Saakashvilis' home in Tbilisi, is still maintained as a public museum, though the crimes of the man against his own people, particularly native Georgians, are beyond repeating, and Sandra Roelof's citation appears demented. One would think Stalin's house would have been burned down long ago, the ashes scattered to the cold Caucasus winds—and I'm not speaking just metaphorically. If Saakashvili wants to really make some democratic bones, he might drive to Gori and light the ceremonial match.

The second man to whom Sandra Roelof compares her husband is Lavrenty Beria, Stalin's secret police czar and the Georgian-born father of the Soviet Gulag. Beria, a notorious pedophile, was responsible for the deaths of millions of Soviet citizens. He was executed on Khrushchev's order after Stalin's death in 1953.

Next on Roelof's list is Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first elected president of Georgia, a rabid nationalist completely intolerant of any opposition. He was deposed in a coup in the early '90s and later shot himself in the head (or was murdered). Two weeks ago Saakashvili announced that 2004 would be "the year of Gamsakhurdia," whatever that is intended to mean.

The last of Roelof's major players is Shevardnadze, the mentoring father figure Saakashvili never had, who

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brought him into parliament, appointed him to his cabinet, and guided him along until Saakashvili turned and stabbed him. Despite the relentless encomiums from the last three U.S. administrations, Shevardnadze was brutal and corrupt. (Saakashvili, who lives around the corner from Shevardnadze in Tbilisi, has never had him arrested.)

The British Helsinki Human Rights Group recently compared Saakashvili's regime to that of Shevardnadze, noting that "Saakashvili has unleashed a wave of arrests against real and imagined opponents, and, like Shevardnadze when he first came to power, his new regime has targeted any media outlet which steps out of line." The report said, "Since Saakashvili won the grotesque presidential election in January 2004, when he was awarded an even higher percentage of the vote than Shevardnadze granted himself in 1992, waves of arrests and media closures have hit Georgia."

The report quotes Saakashvili engaging in neo-Stalinist bluster. "I want to tell the criminal bosses and their defenders that they will get it in the teeth," adding that "anyone who disturbs the sleep of an ordinary citizen will be ruthlessly punished and exterminated." They added what almost goes without saying: "This is hardly the language of a civil society, yet none of the Soros-funded Open Society or anti-death penalty NGOs have piped up to express concern."

It was no surprise to the British Helsinki Human Rights Group when Saakashvili, upon taking office, replaced the Georgian national flag with the flag of his own National Movement party. As a result of Saakashvili's electioneering and his dominance of the Georgian media, particularly the powerful Soros-funded TV station Rustavi 2, which acts as Saakashvili's own *bichon frisé*, his party swept the recent legislative elections by a wide margin. This has left Georgia—and George Soros—with a one-leader, one-party government, a far cry from a noble experiment in democracy. ♦

The U.N. Bloody Hands Commission

Sudan and other defenders of human rights.

BY JOSEPH LOCONTE

AMONG THE COSTS of the Abu Ghraib scandal is the harm it does to America's standing as a champion of human rights—and the distraction it creates, in international circles, from the misdeeds of truly heinous regimes. "Whenever the United States raises a criticism of somebody else, this is immediately what will be thrown back in your face," says Paul Marshall, a senior fellow at Freedom House. "You get this sort of rank, stinking hypocrisy."

Sure enough, America took a tongue-lashing at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, still in session as the Iraq scandal was gathering steam. The representative of none other than Sudan—a country now engaged in a Saddam-sized "ethnic cleansing" of villagers in its Darfur province—offered what is becoming the latest refrain from despots: "It is yet very ironic that the United States, while shedding crocodile tears over the situation in Darfur, is turning a blind eye to the atrocities committed by American forces against the innocent civilian population in Iraq."

At the time those words were spoken, Human Rights Watch had already released a report charging Sudan with crimes against humanity—including widespread rape, the burning of villages, the aerial bombing of civilians, and massacres by government-backed Arab militias. In a separate report, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights accused the Islamic regime of Omar Al Bashir of waging "a reign of terror" against its civilian population. The U.N. team found "massive human rights violations in Darfur perpetrated by the government . . . and its proxy militia." It's estimated that 30,000 people have been killed and over 900,000 displaced by the recent campaign of ethnic cleansing. All this against the backdrop of a 20-year civil war that has claimed the lives of 2 million people and displaced roughly twice that number.

None of its bloody history, of course, prevented Sudan from being elected to another three-year term on the Human Rights Commission. The 53-member body has a record of America-bashing that long precedes the U.S. mistreatment of Iraqi detainees. No matter what issue is on the table, Cuban delegates, for example, use it to denounce U.S. "imperialism" around the world. They have lots of allies. "The United States portrays itself as a role model for protecting social rights, but the reality is not what they would have us believe," intoned a Chinese delegate in Geneva. "It's our hope that the United States will recognize its own shortcomings."

What these countries really hope is that the propaganda value of the prison crisis will give them breathing space to continue their repressive policies. Certainly, the Human Rights Commission won't stand in their way.

Despite a vocal campaign by U.S. ambassador Richard Williamson, the commission quashed a resolution condemning China's policy of extrajudicial killings, torture, and repression of religious and political groups.

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The commission said nothing about Burma, the Chechen Republic, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Syria, or Vietnam—some of the world's most serious rights violators. A resolution criticizing Zimbabwe for a "concerted campaign of violence" against civilians died in its crib. After years of reports of torture and prison camps in North Korea, the commission agreed to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate, but no one thinks he'll be allowed into the country. Israel came in for harsh censure over its policy of assassinating terrorist leaders, while the latest round of Palestinian terrorism was shrugged off.

In all, the commission adopted 88 resolutions, on topics including toxic waste, housing, globalization, and "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health." There were numerous denunciations of the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, but not a word about the abuse of prisoners, especially women, who are brutalized or raped while in government custody throughout the Arab world.

"Hundreds have perished in silence and out of sight, without even a cold announcement," writes Rajeh Khuri, a columnist at Beirut's *al-Nahar* daily. Much of the Arab world, he says, is "a vast Abu Ghraib prison where many have died and more are still dying in obscurity."

An especially eerie display of the U.N.'s jaundiced view of human rights occurred at the recent Geneva meeting, in what should have been a hopeful scene. An official of the new Iraq stood before the Human Rights Commission and calmly recited the evils committed under Saddam Hussein. He spoke of the political assassinations, the chemical assaults that killed thousands of Kurds, the torture chambers, the mass graves. He pledged that from now on his country would uphold international norms protecting political and religious liberties. "The previous regime was the worst violator of human rights," he said. "Our delegation is guided by the U.N. charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

It was a historic moment. Yet those in the assembly hall greeted it with no cheers, no applause, no sense of gratitude. Just a smug silence.

At the beginning of World War II, other smug moralists cited America's sins as the reason for keeping the nation out of the war against Nazism. Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian and socialist critic of liberal democracy, nevertheless saw the fascist threat for what it was. "We never have the chance to choose between pure tyranny and pure freedom," he said. "We can only choose between tyranny and relative democracy." The cynical manipulation of outrage at American abuses suggests that many today still balk at the choice. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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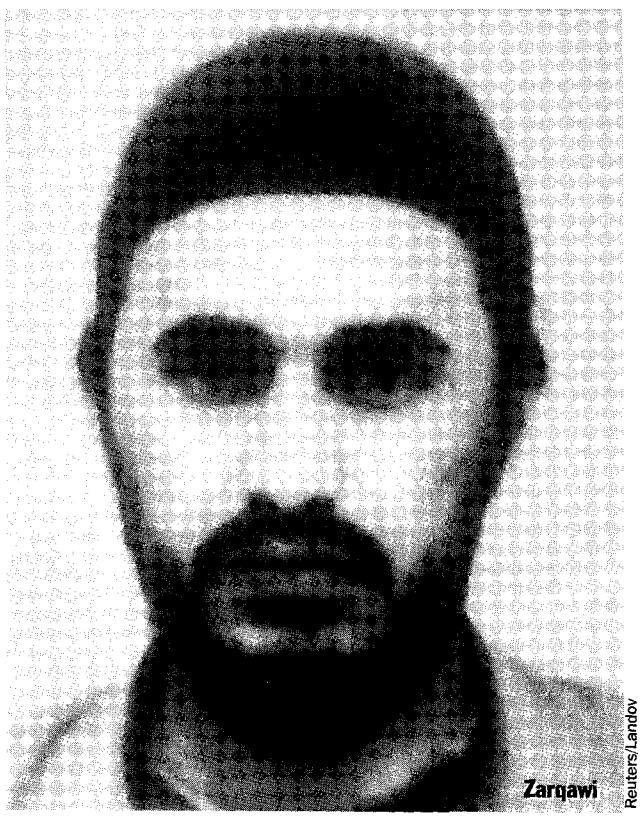
Who Is Abu Zarqawi?

What we know about the terrorist leader who murdered Nicholas Berg

By Robert S. Leiken & Steven Brooke

Who killed Nicholas Berg? His grief-stricken family blames the U.S. government for the appalling videotaped beheading of their son in Iraq. A more fitting object of outrage is the executioner. For the terrorist who claims credit for the killing of the Jewish-American civilian is no walk-on, no lackey or even lieutenant of Osama bin Laden. Instead, he is an independent operator with a long history in global jihad—sometimes coordinated with al Qaeda, sometimes not—who may be challenging bin Laden for the leadership of global Sunni terrorism.



Zarqawi

Reuters/Landov

Abu Musab al Zarqawi is hot right now. He masterminded not only Berg's murder but also the Madrid carnage on March 11, the bombardment of Shia worshippers in Iraq the same month, and the April 24 suicide attack on the port of Basra. But he is far from a newcomer to slaughter. Well before 9/11, he had already concocted a plot to kill Israeli and American tourists in Jordan. His label is on terrorist groups and attacks on four continents.

Zarqawi was first thrust into the global media spotlight in February 2003, before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, when Secretary of State Colin Powell at the U.N. called him an "associate and collaborator" of bin Laden and part of a "sinister nexus between Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist network." Zarqawi, however, is not Osama's man, and still less was he Saddam's.

Zarqawi was born Ahmed al-Khalayleh to a Palestinian-Jordanian family in 1966 and grew up in a shabby two-story dwelling in a dusty mining town 17 miles north of Amman. The town was called Zarqa—hence the *nom de guerre*. But while we know the details of bin Laden's privileged youth, we know next to nothing about Zarqawi's impoverished early years. His parents are dead, and few near relatives have been uncovered by the press. His passport picture is on a U.S. poster offering a $10 million reward for him, but his height and weight are listed as "unknown." Nor do we know what he studied in school; only that he dropped out of high school and locals say he was "pious." Until recently, the mystery man rarely claimed credit for his terrorist exploits. U.S. intelligence once thought he'd been injured

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in the American assault on Afghanistan and had taken refuge in northern Iraq, later traveling to Saddam's Baghdad to have his leg amputated; now they're not so sure.

We do know that like thousands of Muslim youths he rallied to the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and gained renown as a fighter. Returning to Jordan after the Soviet withdrawal, he may have joined the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which merged with al Qaeda in 1998. While in Jordan he also associated with Hizb ut Tahrir, an angry, anti-Semitic conclave devoted to the restoration of Islamic rule. Released in 1997 after five years in a Jordanian prison for plotting to replace the monarchy with an Islamic state, Zarqawi fled to Europe. He returned to Afghanistan in 2000 and built his own network of training camps near Herat, seizing control of the clandestine routes between Iran and Afghanistan.

In his camps, Zarqawi dispensed his specialized knowledge of chemical weapons and poisons to loyal followers, who then dispersed to the Middle East and Europe. The week of April 19, Jordanian police broke up a Zarqawi-financed and orchestrated plot they estimate would have detonated 20 tons of chemicals and released a cloud of poisonous gas into central Amman. The blast could have killed some 80,000 civilians and destroyed the U.S. embassy and Jordanian intelligence headquarters. In a videotaped confession shown on Jordanian TV, the head of the cell admitted, "I took explosives courses, poisons high level, then I pledged allegiance to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, to obey him without any questioning."

Abu Zarqawi knows no limits and many continents. Investigating the Hamburg cell after September 11, German authorities came across another terrorist group called al-Tawhid (unity), made up mainly of Palestinian militants trained in Zarqawi's Afghan camps. Tawhid operatives told investigators they got their start in Europe selling stolen and forged documents to militants traveling between the Middle East and Western Europe.

With the outbreak of war in Iraq, Tawhid converted its alien-smuggling and document-forgery ring into a two-way underground railroad between Western Europe and the Middle East. According to European press reports, networks in Spain, Italy, and Germany send recruits into Iraq via Syria. U.S. military officials in Iraq now blame the most heinous terrorist attacks on "the Zarqawi network." But Zarqawi's alien-smuggling system also dispatches Middle Eastern jihadis into Europe via Spain, Turkey, Italy, and Greece. In November 2003, Italian wiretaps recorded two Tawhid operatives speaking of "the jihad part" and its "battalion of 25-26 units" of suicide bombers.

If Zarqawi's underground railroad demonstrates the terrorist uses of illegal immigration, the investigation into the Madrid bombings reveals new connections to Zarqawi every week. Zarqawi's lieutenant, a 36-year-old Moroccan named Amer el Azizi, planned the Madrid terror and is the living link between al Qaeda, the Zarqawi network, and the Moroccan immigrant cell that set the Madrid bombs. Azizi also organized and presided over the 2001 meeting in Spain where Mohammed Atta and al Qaeda leaders put the finishing touches on the September 11 plan.

Azizi fled Spain in November 2001 as Spanish authorities dismantled the al Qaeda logistics cell. He jetted to Afghanistan via Iran, where Zarqawi's cross-border networks helped him elude the coalition. While falling in with Zarqawi, Azizi kept an eye on Spain and his Moroccan colleagues, who managed to set off bombs in Casablanca in May 2003. Shortly before the Madrid 3/11 train bombings, Azizi left Iran via Turkey and slipped into Spain to witness the carnage firsthand. He is still at large.

Probably the murkiest and most intriguing feature of this man of many mysteries is the question of Zarqawi's relations with Osama bin Laden. Though he met with bin Laden in Afghanistan several times, the Jordanian never joined al Qaeda. Militants have explained that Tawhid was "especially for Jordanians who did not want to join al Qaeda." A confessed Tawhid member even told his interrogators that Zarqawi was "against al Qaeda." Shortly after 9/11, a fleeing Ramzi bin al-Shibh, one of the main plotters of the attacks, appealed to Tawhid operatives for a forged visa. He could not come up with ready cash. Told that he did not belong to Tawhid, he was sent packing and eventually into the arms of the Americans.

Zarqawi and bin Laden also disagree over strategy. Zarqawi allegedly constructed his Tawhid network primarily to target Jews and Jordan. This choice reflected both Zarqawi's Palestinian heritage and his dissent from bin Laden's strategy of focusing on the "far enemy"—the United States. In an audiotape released after the recent foiled gas attack in Amman, an individual claiming to be Zarqawi argued that the Jordanian Intelligence Services building was indeed the target, although no chemical attack was planned. Rather, he stated menacingly, "God knows, if we did possess [a chemical bomb], we wouldn't hesitate one second to use it to hit Israeli cities such as Eilat and Tel Aviv."

The Tawhid cell uncovered in Hamburg after 9/11 scouted Jewish targets, including businesses and synagogues. Zarqawi's operatives have been implicated in an

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attack on a Mombassa hotel frequented by Israeli tourists and an attempt to shoot down an Israeli jetliner. He is also suspected to have played a role in the Casablanca bombings of a Jewish community center and a Spanish social club. In February 2002, a Jordanian court sentenced him in absentia to 15 years' hard labor for his involvement in a failed plot to kill American and Israeli tourists at the turn of the millennium, a scheme coordinated with Abu Zubaydah, a top lieutenant of bin Laden. And another Jordanian court sentenced him, again in absentia, to death for the assassination of U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley. Zarqawi is also the prime suspect in the August 2003 truck bombing of the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad.

Zarqawi has been associated with other groups besides Tawhid. Most notorious is Ansar al Islam, a largely Kurdish organization operating out of Northern Iraq, which U.S. officials have linked to al Qaeda. Before the war, Ansar al Islam ran chemical warfare camps in northern Iraq. Last year British counterterrorist investigators traced poisonous ricin found in Manchester to those camps. Zarqawi has been linked with two less-known al Qaeda splinter groups, Beyyiat el-Imam, implicated in attacks in Israel as well as the November 2003 attack on a synagogue in Turkey, and Jund al-Shams, a Syrian-Jordanian group blamed by Jordanian authorities for the assassination of Foley. Zarqawi has also been linked to Chechen jihadis, and Indian intelligence says he belongs to Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a Pakistani Sunni group responsible for slaying hundreds of Shias in South Asia.

The slaughter of Shias touches on another Zarqawi beef with bin Laden. While both men follow the strict code of Salafi Islam, which reckons Shias as apostates, bin Laden prides himself on being a unifying figure and has made tactical alliances with Shia groups, meeting several times with Shia militants. Zarqawi, by contrast, favors butchering Shias, calling them "the most evil of mankind . . . the lurking snake, the crafty and malicious scorpion, the spying enemy, and the penetrating venom." American military officials hold Zarqawi responsible not only for assassinating Shia religious leaders in Iraq, but also for the multiple truck bombings of a Shia religious festival this past March, which killed 143 worshippers.

But though bin Laden and Zarqawi differ on strategy, Zarqawi too cloaks his plans for mass murder in the language of the religious zealot. To Zarqawi, "religion is more precious than anything and has priority over lives, wealth, and children." He considers Iraq ideal for jihad especially because "it is a stone's throw from the lands of the two Holy Precincts [Saudi Arabia] and the al Aqsa [mosque, in Jerusalem]. We know from God's religion that the true, decisive battle between infidelity and Islam is in this land [Greater Syria and its surroundings]. . . ." On the tape of the beheading of Nick Berg, entitled "Sheikh Abu Musab Zarqawi executes an American with his own hands and promises Bush more," Zarqawi rages, "Where is the compassion, where is the anger for God's religion, and where is the protection for Muslims' pride in the crusaders' jails? . . . The pride of all Muslim men and women in Abu Ghraib and other jails is worth blood and souls."

The CIA has verified that Zarqawi himself spoke on the tape and personally beheaded Berg. Similarly, the videotaped beheading of Daniel Pearl of the *Wall Street Journal* in February 2002 was carried out directly by another jihadi leader, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. The latter, like Zarqawi, never swore allegiance to bin Laden. In this bloodthirsty crowd, it appears that slitting the throat of an American Jew wins laurels.

In January 2004, Iraqi Kurds captured a message from Zarqawi in Iraq to bin Laden. Zarqawi offered bin Laden a chance to expand al Qaeda's role in Iraq. Victory, Zarqawi instructed, meant fomenting sectarian war between Shiites and Sunnis. There are no indications that bin Laden responded, and there are now signs of cooperation between some Iraqi Shia and Sunni militants. Are bin Laden and Zarqawi running competing terrorist organizations in Iraq?

Zarqawi's letter is addressed to a colleague or even a potential competitor rather than to one he regards as his sheikh or emir. He offers darkly, "We do not see ourselves as fit to challenge you." Zarqawi gives bin Laden two choices: "If you agree with us . . . we will be your readied soldiers, working under your banner, complying with your orders, and indeed swearing fealty to you publicly and in the news media. . . . If things appear otherwise to you, we are brothers, and the disagreement will not spoil [our] friendship."

Zarqawi exemplifies Sunni terrorism after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, what some call "al Qaeda 2.0." The Western counteroffensive decimated al Qaeda's leadership, stripped the organization of safe havens and training camps, and disrupted its command and control. Former al Qaeda subsidiaries became franchises, receiving inspiration from bin Laden's occasional messages but operating independently. Historically speaking, the dynamic of revolutionary movements favors the most radical faction—the Jacobins, not the Girondists, the Bolsheviks, not the Menshiviks. If this dynamic prevails in contemporary Sunni terrorism, Abu Musab al Zarqawi represents the future. ♦

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It's America's War

But too many Democrats think it's Bush's war

By David Gelernter

These are times when President Bush and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld could probably use some encouragement. They should ponder a short note by Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill. It was May 1941 and World War II was going badly. Churchill was Britain's Bush *and* Rumsfeld, prime minister and minister of defense. Eden was his foreign secretary and friend. There had been disasters in Greece and Crete, a discouraging naval battle with the warship *Bismarck*, and hard fighting in Iraq, where the British were battling Nazi-backed Rashid Ali and Luftwaffe bombers that were helping him out. "My dear Winston," Eden wrote, "This is a bad day; but tomorrow Baghdad will be entered, *Bismarck* sunk. On some day the war will be won, and you will have done more than any other man in history to win it."

By "tomorrow" he meant "soon"; his predictions all came true. But for now, it is indeed a bad day.

Too many Democrats and some Republicans are acting as if Abu Ghraib means that the Bush administration is in trouble. They are wrong. It means that America is in trouble. And when America is in trouble, every public official is required to help.

The bestial murder of Nicholas Berg has nothing to do with Abu Ghraib. Absolute evil is self-seeding; nothing *causes* it any more than we *cause* rats to spawn or the black plague to blossom. But certain conditions help it thrive—such as the worldwide seething toxic stink of America Hatred, or the ongoing struggle by so many thinkers (especially Europeans) to legitimize terrorism (all those torn-to-pieces Israeli innocents dismissed with a shrug or a smirk). Perhaps the murder of Berg—9/11 compressed into one single act, a black hole of infinite wickedness—will at last bring American moral showboating to an end. We all love to tell the world how much we care. It's so easy, so cheap. Perhaps we will now get serious.

Because of Abu Ghraib, America is (temporarily!) down and out and getting kicked in the head by every two-bit moralizing moron in the universe, while her thoughtful Euro-friends twist the knife by informing us that hundreds of dead American soldiers might just as well have stayed home; America's rule is no better than Saddam's. We need to hear from America's political leaders, loud and clear: "Yes, we abominate the Abu Ghraib crimes but *will not accept* your forgetting what America has paid to liberate Iraq, will *not allow* foreign nations to slander the United States, *will not permit you to forget* what we and the British have accomplished: a world without Saddam Hussein; a vastly safer, profoundly better world. And *no one* will be allowed to dishonor American soldiers and this nation by telling us 'you're just as bad as Saddam'; that lie will never go unchallenged."

We need to hear those things especially from Democrats. For the world to know that this nation is united, *Democrats* have to speak. They haven't. The message has not been delivered.

Let's go back a few weeks. What were we thinking? Maybe the war in Iraq was a mistake, or maybe it was fought the wrong way (I didn't think so, but many serious and discouraged Americans did)—but we all knew this for sure: Thanks to American and British sacrifice in money and blood, Saddam was gone and Iraq was on the road to being free, and we could all be proud of that. A blood-black stain on mankind's honor had been washed away.

Then some photographs appeared, and the world saw ugly crimes—crimes of the sort Americans particularly hate, bullying crimes of the strong against the weak. Of course it was right to denounce the criminals and demand investigations and accountability. Such sentiments were easy to express (how many people are in *favor* of prisoner abuse?), but public officials did need to express them. So far so good.

But there was something else these officials needed to express. "We will not tolerate the world's using the crimes at Abu Ghraib to smear America, or belittle the price we have paid in Iraq." In the prevailing climate of moral showboating, *those* sentiments were hard to express; and almost no one bothered.

The moment we saw those pictures we knew (every last American knew) that *the punch in the gut is on the way*. People who never cared a damn what Saddam did to his prisoners would be choking back tears of outrage. Americans

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hold themselves to a higher moral standard, of course. But most Americans suspected that the world's reaction had as much to do with America Hatred as it did with *moral standards*. We knew that people would forget what we have achieved in Iraq, and what it has cost us in arms and legs and eyes and blood. We knew our enemies would light into America and do their best to turn the world against us and against our troops—whom we had seen risking their lives to liberate Iraq and make it safe—not to mention the civilians who hazarded life and limb to get clean water flowing, oil pumping, power on, schools open, streets policed, the economy inching forward, and democracy coming steadily closer. We could all anticipate headlines like the one that appeared in the May 8 *Irish Times*: "The shaming of America. George Bush's boast of shutting down Saddam Hussein's torture chambers in Iraq rings hollow now." We knew our enemies would use those photos to smear our whole Army, our whole Iraq campaign, our whole nation. Much of the world (after all) operates on America Hate the way a car runs on gas or a tick on blood.

"*The shaming of America. George Bush's boast of shutting down Saddam Hussein's torture chambers in Iraq rings hollow now*." The hell it does. Anyone who equates Saddam's bloody decades of torture and mass murder to the crimes at Abu Ghraib is the same kind of fool who once preached the moral equivalence of America and Soviet Russia, or of America in Vietnam and Hitlerism. Imbecility is eternal, perpetually reincarnated.

And it's hardly irrelevant that the Army did discover and announce the crimes itself. No one had to order any generals to investigate and prosecute the criminals. That was already happening. No cover-up; no chance of the criminals escaping. The military's record in recent years suggests that the opposite danger is more acute: Innocent soldiers might be punished because of a runaway public relations steamroller. Remember Tailhook and the naval careers it destroyed to make ideologues happy?

Think back to 9/11—America was in trouble; possibly official malfeasance was a factor, no one knew; but we *did* know that it was the duty of every U.S. public leader to *speak for America, right away*. (As someone shouted during the parliamentary hour-of-crisis debate that led to Churchill's promotion to the premiership: Speak for England!) And U.S. public leaders, Republican and Democrat, *did* speak for America. The country was proud to see Gephardt and Daschle roaming around with Lott and Hastert. The Democrats had lost the White House, but rose to the occasion. The world noticed; the nation was grateful.

When Abu Ghraib broke, America was in trouble again. Once again she needed *all* her government officials to do their duty, all public persons to stand up and defend her. But last week was no 9/11. The Democrats did not rise. They sunk. No one blamed them for condemning the criminals and demanding investigations. But we needed to hear *more*, and we didn't. Senator Tom Daschle said, "I think that is inexcusable. It's an outrage. It's wrong." And Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi said, "We must have a full investigation to get to the bottom of this outrage." And Senator Carl Levin said, "The actions of these individuals have jeopardized members of the Armed Services in the conduct of their mission, and have jeopardized the security of this country." Which was all true. But it was not enough. And there was worse. Ted Kennedy, echoing America Hatred at its ugliest, said that "Saddam's torture chambers have reopened under new management, U.S. management." The world noticed; the nation was quietly heartbroken.

Republican smugness is not in order. It is a moment for Republicans to ask themselves: Have *we* ever, at any moment in recent decades, let the nation down like this?

I don't think so. But if somebody knows differently, tell me. (No crackpots, please.) This is not a time for party preening. It is one of the sadder moments in American history.

But as Anthony Eden reminds us: "Some day the war will be won."

The pressure on Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is fierce, because Abu Ghraib hit at a moment when many people were certain that the Iraq war had bogged down. And it *had* bogged down. It is in the nature of wars that they bog down occasionally. But that is no reason to sack the man who has run this stupendously complex, difficult operation with (on the whole) amazing success and integrity. Perhaps Rumsfeld and other Bush officials did not make *quite* clear enough beforehand that war is no picnic. But many Americans had already heard rumors to that effect. And the record will show that the secretary has in fact admitted (possibly under oath) that he is not perfect. Republicans who hint around that the defense secretary may indeed have to be cut up and thrown to the dogs are doing the nation no service.

Churchill got into parliamentary trouble repeatedly during the Second World War, but thank God the House of Commons did not sack him. In the Second World War, Britain did not merely bog down, she *lost*—early and often. If 1940 and '41 had their awful moments, 1942 started out worse. In January the House took up a no-confidence motion that could have deposed Churchill—British troops were reeling before the Japanese advance, and worse was to come. Before long Singapore fell, "the greatest disaster in British military history," Churchill called it; 130,000 British and Allied troops were taken prisoner. And later the

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same year Rommel captured the Libyan port of Tobruk: A British garrison of 35,000 men surrendered to a smaller Axis force. "One of the heaviest blows I can recall during the war," Churchill said. On such occasions Britain was discouraged, disheartened, humiliated. Yet somehow Parliament managed to restrain itself and *not* axe Churchill.

Churchill is one of history's greatest leaders, almost certainly its greatest minister of defense and a genius writer and orator. So far as we know, Bush is no Churchill and neither is Rumsfeld; they haven't been tried as Churchill was. But until a bona fide American Churchill comes along, they are doing fine. ♦

Who's Afraid of Abu Ghraib?

The scandal won't determine the fate of democracy in the Middle East

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

According to Shibley Telhami, the Anwar Sadat professor for peace and development at the University of Maryland, "the humiliating scenes of abused Iraqi prisoners" and the war in general "have turned that country [Iraq] into a model to be feared and avoided in the eyes of many in the Middle East, and a tool in the hands of governments reluctant to change." Telhami, who was a driving force behind a recent major Muslim-targeted public-diplomacy project chaired by former assistant secretary of state Edward Djerejian and paid for by Uncle Sam, sees American-occupied Iraq as "a far cry from the anticipated model of inspiration that the administration promised would spur demands for democracy in the Arab world." In the eyes of Jackson Diehl, a liberal columnist for the *Washington Post* who regularly lends his voice to Arabs struggling against dictatorship, "the photos from Abu Ghraib prison may have destroyed what was left of the Bush administration's credibility with Arab popular opinion," which—combined with the administration's recent actions backing Israel's Ariel Sharon and Libya's unreformed dictator Muammar Qaddafi—have surely undermined the promotion of democracy, supposedly the administration's top priority in the Middle East.

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Echoing the same themes in the *Financial Times*, former senior Clinton administration officials Ivo Daalder and Anthony Lake see the Abu Ghraib scandal as a significant factor undermining "whatever credibility or legitimacy the U.S. presence in Iraq may once have had." They are certain that "in Iraq today, America no longer offers a solution," rather "it has become part of the problem." Also panicked and shamed by the images of Abu Ghraib, Secretary of State Colin Powell has been telephoning all over the Middle East and listening to Arab rulers and foreign ministers express their dismay at what transpired. "They are disappointed in us," Powell commented. The rulers and the ruled are "outraged and there's a serious backlash. . . . We have presented ourselves as a value-based country—and we are. And so when they see this kind of activity taking place—this horrible, horrible series of pictures that we've witnessed—it causes a tremendous response out in the region." To try to stem the tide of ill will, the secretary is soon traveling to Jordan to "have a chance to talk with many, many Arab leaders and try to put this in some context and perspective, and to convey to them what we are doing to help the Iraqi people."

In the battle for Muslim hearts and minds—which many on the left and right believe is the only solution to Islamic terrorism aimed at the United States—things have just gone to hell thanks to a perverse, kinky group of American soldiers and their military-intelligence overlords who seem to have mixed the U.S. armed forces' manuals on interrogation with S&M techniques. Even a viewer

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of the Fox News Channel who never hops to CNN might now conclude that our goose is cooked in Iraq and the greater Middle East. With such American depravity and Arab hatred, the Bush administration has dug a hole that we may never get out of.

But is our situation in Iraq really in any way compromised by Abu Ghraib? Have the chances of democracy in the Middle East really been set back because sexually sensitive Muslims are so revolted that they won't embrace representative government? Or to put it more broadly, is America's standing in the Muslim world a popularity contest where our chances of success—whatever the mission may be—are directly proportional to how much an American president and his officials or the American people and their values are liked and esteemed?

Let us look at Iraq post-Abu Ghraib. As disgusting as the tactics of the 800th Military Police Brigade may have been, they have not elicited much condemnation from Iraq's Arab Shiites and Sunni Kurds, who represent about 80 percent of the country's population. Most critically, the senior clergy of Najaf, in particular Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Iraq's preeminent Shiite divine who virtually has a de facto veto over American actions, has hardly mentioned the matter, let alone aroused the faithful against the moral pollution of the American occupation.

There are probably several reasons for this. Both the Shia and the Kurds, not to mention the Arab Sunnis who were on the receiving end of Saddam Hussein's wickedness, know very well what real bestiality is. They know real sexual torture—Saddam institutionalized rape as a means of destroying and preemptively neutering individual male and tribal pride. Though there are surely too few U.S. troops in Iraq, most Iraqis have had some contact with American soldiers. They may not view them as German children viewed World War II GIs, but they have certainly had enough contact to know that American personnel, with the rarest exceptions, aren't rapists, sexual deviants, or by reflex or training particularly violent people. If this weren't the case, the senior clergy of Najaf would have long ago declared a holy war against the American occupation, as they declared a jihad against the British in 1920. The young clerical militant Moktada al-Sadr would have tens of thousands of recruits, and coalition forces would be fortified in their barracks, not on the offensive.

Also, the Shiites and Kurds probably assume that the humiliated prisoners in Abu Ghraib are Sunnis (which may in fact be the case). Though the Shiites and Kurds have so far been remarkably restrained in their desire for *intiqam*—revenge—which is a leitmotif of Iraqi culture, they probably are not above enjoying schadenfreude. They also want the Americans to beat the ex-Baathists, Arab fundamentalists, and foreign Sunni holy wa who are trying to drive the Americans out of Iraq anc the march toward democracy. After all, democracy inevitably empower Shiites and frustrate the Sunni A penchant for pummeling the Kurds. Their tolerance unpleasant American tactics in this endeavor is probab quite high. Unlike much of Washington, D.C., they hav not lost sight of the larger objective: creating a democratic Iraq where they and their children will never again know the horrors of dictatorship.

Which is why, of course, the Shiite clergy has been focused throughout the Abu Ghraib affair on the guerrilla campaign of Moktada al-Sadr, who is detested by the traditional clergy since he is challenging their religious leadership and Sistani's decision to cooperate with the Americans. They've also been watching the Marines at Falluja and the American decision to return Baathist soldiers to duty to placate and quiet the town, which has been a center of Sunni Arab resistance. The American decision in Falluja provoked Jalaluddin al-Saghir, a spokesman for Sistani, to warn that "members of the Baath party committed the most heinous crimes and created bloodbaths and the biggest mass graves in the history of mankind." A very healthy self-interest is an obvious and major reason why Iraq's Shiites and Kurds—and perhaps a decent slice of its Arab Sunnis—can watch the images of Abu Ghraib and maintain their equanimity. They have vastly more important things to worry about.

As do Arabs throughout the Middle East. A very odd, very American notion about foreign affairs has now become gospel in certain quarters in Washington: Bin Ladenism will end and democracy spread throughout the Muslim Middle East only when a critical mass of Muslims like, respect, and trust us. Democracy cannot exist in the Muslim mind on its own merits but is judged overwhelmingly by the actions and intrinsic goodness of the United States. Or, as Professor Telhami put it, "When you don't trust the messenger, you don't trust the message, even if it's a good one." Muslims, especially Arab Muslims to whom Bush administration officials feel especially obliged to apologize for Abu Ghraib, have become so America-centric, according to this view, that they cannot admire democracy even though democracy as it is practiced in much of Western Europe has produced political elites that are pro-Arab, pro-Palestinian, and anti-Zionist. But Muslims' appreciation of democracy cannot be that nuanced. Or, to put it another way, Muslims aren't rational, historical actors. Their political predilections—unlike those of Americans or Europeans or Japanese—aren't shaped primarily by the soci-

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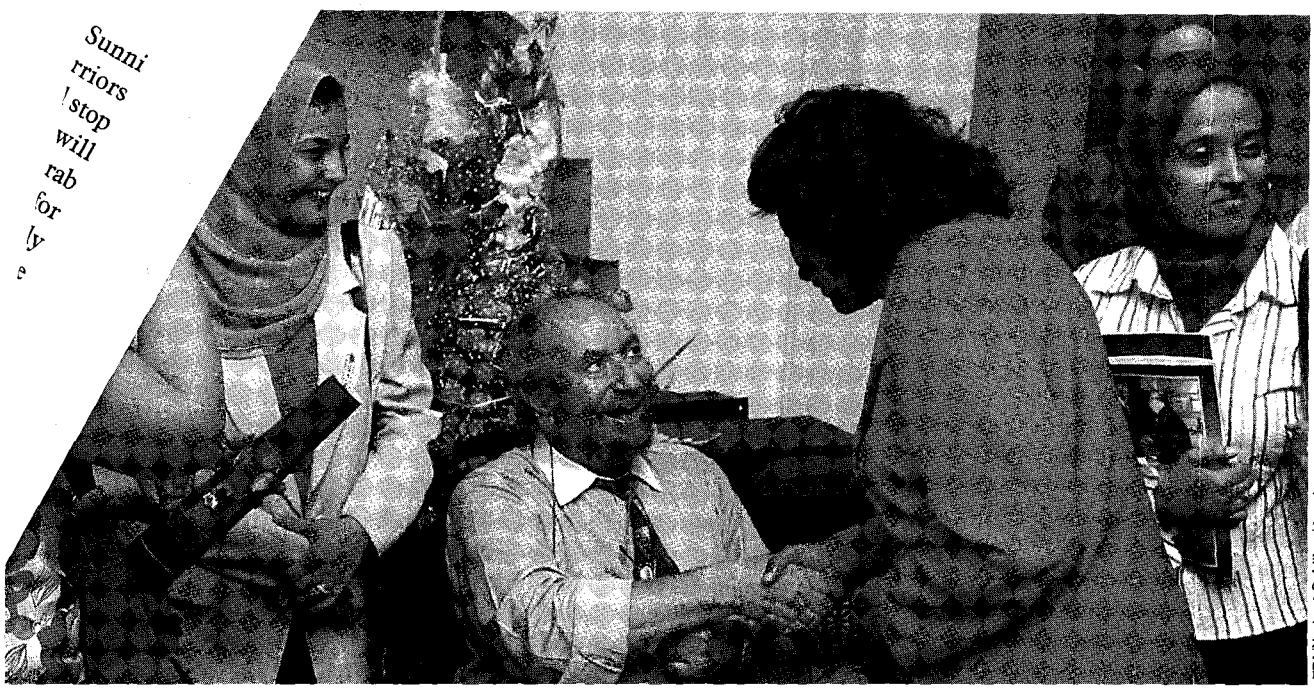

EPA/Norbert Schiller / Landov

Egyptian liberal Saad Eddin Ibrahim returns to public life in Cairo, June 2003, after his acquittal on political charges.

eties in which they live, but by foreigners whom they rarely see except on TV.

A historical analogy. Let us suppose that George H.W. Bush had marched to Baghdad in 1991 and ousted Saddam Hussein and the Baath party. Let us suppose that the Abu Ghraib scandal had happened then. Does anyone believe this would have altered attitudes toward elected government in, say, Algeria? In 1991, the Algerian military regime canceled parliamentary elections when it became clear fundamentalists were going to win. Would the Algerian generals' case against democracy have been more appealing to the members of the Islamic Salvation Front and other Islamist parties who really wanted a democratically elected alternative to military autocracy because American soldiers made Iraqi prisoners stack themselves naked? Algerian democrats—not the hard-core fundamentalists who wanted one man, one vote, one time—could have managed, I think, to hate America (and their former colonial master, democratic France), hate the one-party state that had impoverished their country, and still have the wisdom to see that democracy would end the tyranny of the latter and allow them to continue to detest the former.

Or consider a contemporary parallel. In March 2004, the new Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and most influential fundamentalist organization in the world, allied his followers to a plan for gradual but substantive constitutional and political reform in Egypt. Egyptian liberals, like Saad Eddin Ibrahim, also back the effort, as do a fairly wide array of individuals and organizations, many of which, like the Muslim Brotherhood, you would never describe as "pro-American." Does anybody really believe that these people, especially the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, will find Egyptian president-for-life Hosni Mubarak's case against democracy more persuasive because some American soldiers and intelligence officials in Baghdad thought forced onanism was an effective aid to interrogation? Democracy and anti-Americanism can happily and healthily coexist. What's true in Latin America is true in the Middle East. Muslims are not children.

Indeed, the democratic ethic in the Middle East has often been carried by men who have a tense, if not hostile, attitude toward the West. "Islamic modernists" of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wanted to import more representative government into the Muslim world, in addition to many other Western ideals and manners, in order to fortify their homelands *against* European influence and imperialism. A modern-day version of this is Iran's "moderate" president, Mohammad Khatami, who desperately wants to insert some democracy into Iran's theocracy precisely to allow Iranian society, and via Iran the entire Muslim world, to stand toe to toe against the perfidious influence of the United States. In Khatami's books, *Fear of the Wave* and *From the World of the City to the City of the World*, the cleric clearly depicts democracy as an essential mechanism to allow the Muslim faith and culture to flourish and compete against the awesome liberal (too liberal), increasingly irreligious, tradition-crushing, cleric-hating, anti-Muslim bulldozer called America. Is it too much to suggest that Khatami and Iranian mullahs who are even more committed to democracy than he have not

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lost faith in the virtues of representative government because some U.S. soldiers and military intelligence officials have some things in common with the state-sanctioned torturers who thrive in clerical Iran's prisons?

It is true that the democratic ethic is not as highly developed in the Arab Sunni world as it is among the Shiites of Iran or the clerics of Najaf (see again the Grand Ayatollah's stunning June 29, 2003, fatwa, or juridical opinion, in favor of democracy to see how advanced Iraqi Shiite thinking is on the virtues of representative government). But Arab Sunnis are much more advanced than many in the West, especially among the "pro-Arab" crowd in academe and in the Near East Bureau of the State Department, appear to think.

To put it tersely: The Abu Ghraib affair hasn't hurt at all the cause of democracy in the greater Middle East, so long as the United States doesn't believe it has. For most Muslims, the affair really doesn't matter politically. It's the Americans who are the weak link. Unfortunately, much of our view of the Muslim Middle East is shaped by our own profound, understandable, and in other circumstances often commendable liberal guilt. (We are certainly more ashamed of ourselves than Muslim fundamentalists are ashamed of us—you have to admire or feel some fraternity with someone before you can feel ashamed of them.) And Muslim, especially Arab, liberals, who often serve as a lens for Westerners on the Middle East, have not helped either.

They are in an awful predicament. Often far from the Muslim mainstream on sensitive issues, regularly scared of being labeled "pro-American" or worse "pro-Zionist" for having distinctly Western views on many subjects, Muslim liberals live in fear of American actions that for them could reverberate badly. They are not the cutting edge of democracy in the Middle East—religiously oriented organizations are—though they fancy themselves the vanguard. And they always have the ear and usually the sympathies of the Western press and diplomatic corps. Pain for them inevitably gets magnified and transmogrified into pain for the entire Middle East. We should always wish them well—on many issues the liberals fight a very lonely and noble fight. But they are too often poor analysts of the Muslim world in which they are politically and morally off-balance. For them, the Abu Ghraib affair opens up a cultural can of worms that could easily and gleefully be exploited by their opponents. We should not allow, however, their emotions over Abu Ghraib to become ours.

Properly understood, the spread of democracy in the Muslim Middle East is now well into its second century. Bitter experience with the Western pathogens of socialism, communism, and fascism, which arrived after World War I, started building an appreciation among M for checks on power. So, too, the explosion of h pathogens in the form of Islamic revolution in Iran Sudan, and the awful indigenous violence of extreme ni fundamentalism of which bin Ladenism is one exp sion. The political experience of Muslims has been lo and painful. And in that pain, the constant trial by erro Muslims have learned and evolved. A democratic ethi really does exist in Iran and Iraq and among ordinary people in the Sunni Arab world, even among fundamentalists. You can see it in the Arab press, in the dictators' and hardcore fundamentalists' fear of free elections where one man, one vote ultimately will decide the mores and political leadership of a country.

For over a thousand years, Greek thought fortified the antidemocratic strain in Muslim monotheism. As the great Oxford and Harvard scholar of the Middle East Hamilton Gibb once pointed out, Greek logic and physics, which took the Muslim world, particularly its scholarly classes, by storm, powerfully reinforced the "Koranic conception of God as absolute will . . . and the Koranic statements as absolute postulates," leading Muslims to always "stress the unimaginable transcendence of God" and his Holy Law. "Islamic theology is thus always forced into extreme positions. There can be no agent of any kind in the universe except God, since the existence of an agent implies the possibility of an action independent of God, and therefore a theoretical limitation on the absolute power of God."

But Muslims have always given more weight to practice than philosophy and theology. Islam's philosophers and religious scholars are perpetually playing catch up, trying to make the ideal match the reality. That reality for the last one hundred years has been increasingly dark, where the absolutist traditions within Islam have merged with absolutist political strains imported from the West to make life ugly, if not hell on earth. Muslims this time round are increasingly embracing the democratic idea—perhaps the most seductive Greek creation—to limit the damage that one Muslim can do to another. America and its power may be an important element in this process. They may not. But two things are certain. First, Secretary Powell talking to Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah about our Abu Ghraib shame is truly odd given that we have asked both to interrogate al Qaeda suspects more "aggressively" than the 800th MP Brigade ever did Iraqi prisoners. And second, in the nearly 1,400 years of Islamic history, Abu Ghraib is a blip that cannot possibly derail the long Muslim march to a time when the faithful elect their political leaders, just as they believe their forebears did after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. ♦

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Arabian Fables (I)

rabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

amous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will bs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that

ome of these myths?

nians." That is the fundamental myth. The the concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not out 1948, when the Arab inhabitants of what until alestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the il then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the ian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World l Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in in hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and w to kill all the Jews); there was he Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*, and so much more.

The Arabs, who now call themselves "Palestinians," do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But, of course, they are no distinct nationality at all. They are entirely the same — in language, customs, and tribal ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians," or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank." Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of the territories of Judea and Samaria and part of the city of Jerusalem. The Jordanians promptly expelled all Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish institutions and houses of worship, used Jewish cemetery headstones to build military latrines, and renamed as "West Bank" what had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy). Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

> "The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories." After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (now renamed "West Bank"), which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians but which (hundreds of miles from Egypt proper) had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau of about 400 square miles, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been ceded to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is a myth created by Arab propaganda.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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The Last Liberal

Sargent Shriver's life and times

By MICHAEL NOVAK

Shriver and his children with President Johnson. All photos: Smithsonian.

One day, early in the summer of 1970, I read in the *New York Times* that Sargent Shriver was opening an office in Washington to help elect Democrats to Congress. Shriver had just returned from a tour as ambassador to France and was eager, the story implied, to join the political battle against Nixon and Agnew. "Sounds like fun," I told my wife over morning coffee. Three hours later, the phone rang, and it was Shriver, inviting me down to Washington to write for him.

He explained—when I visited him the next day at Timberlawn, his Maryland home, out Rockville Pike from Washington—that he had been reading my book *The Experience of Nothingness* during his last days in France. He read some of it aloud to me right there, and asked me if I would be willing to come and write for him: We would be on the road all summer, right through Election Day, he explained, which meant I would need to take a semester's leave of absence from the university in the fall, but my family could live at Timberlawn in the pool house during the campaign.

I said yes. When a little later I was introduced to Eunice, she smiled and said Sarge would be tough on me. "Give you five dollars if you're still here Election Day," she tossed her hair in the way parochial schoolgirls used to do. It was a marvelous adventure, those five months. There were people working in the office on K Street, there were advance teams, press secretaries, and sometimes an old-time Kennedy (or Stevenson or Humphrey or Johnson) hand for advice and company and schmoozing. And then there was Sarge and me. We did thirty-eight states, and I forget how many campaigns—pretty close to a hundred, I think.

Sarge
The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver
by Scott Stossel
Smithsonian, 761 pp., $52.50

I remember Sarge almost killing himself by taking a dare in South Dakota and allowing a bunch of the Democrats there to seat him on one side of a big inner tube near the shore of the local lake, with a rope tied to its other side, the rope then strung out about thirty feet to a power boat. When the men with drinks in their hands roared off at high speed, I was sure Sarge was going to lose both his legs in the boat's wake.

I also remember campaigning in Oakland, and Ron Dellums telling Sarge in front of the crowd that Oakland was so tough that even the muggers went in twos. We also put in a stop for another freshman, this time for the California Assembly, John Vasconcellos—who stays in touch with me to this day—and met in Sacramento with Jerry Brown, too. We baked in the desert at 110 degrees in Palm Springs, deplaning from a four-seat Cessna flown briskly by a woman pilot who wore a white jumpsuit with a flying tiger emblem on her buckle. We did Vegas, Albuquerque, Toledo, anywhere anybody wanted a headliner for a chicken dinner fundraiser. There were movie stars or athletes to join us at almost every stop. There were always Peace Corps veter-

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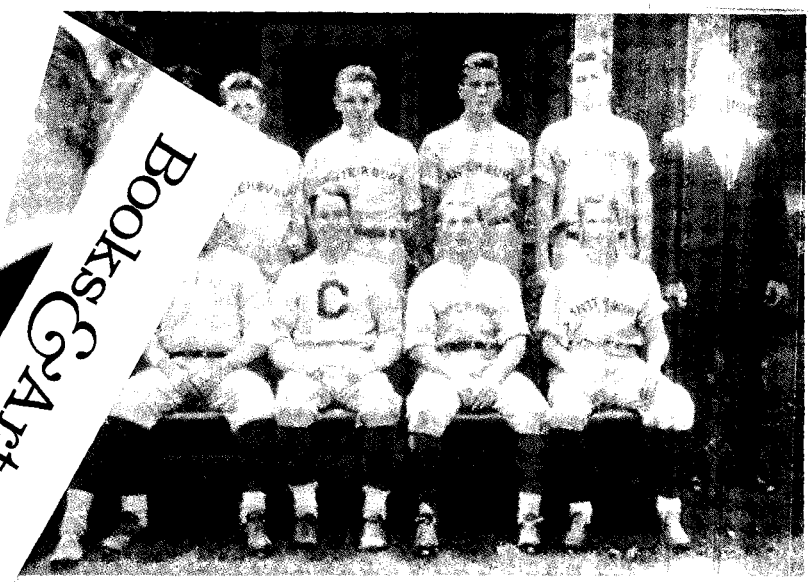

Shriver as captain of the baseball team at the Canterbury school.

is, or Job Corps veterans, or Upward Bound leaders. There was an army of Shriver people everywhere.

Sarge liked to have three or four index cards, block-printed with felt-tip pens, for each of the nine themes of the campaign. The main facts, a story or two to illustrate, a funny line or two, a throat-tightener, a punchy ending, or a lead into the next sequence. He would vary these sequences, depending on the crowd or occasion. He thought a good speech ought to move an audience through several different moods, from hilarity through sadness and on to resolve. He liked to keep things fresh. Every day he would hand me new clippings with facts or stories to "work in."

He always wanted a "touch of class," as well, by which he meant a quotation from a theologian, philosopher, or classic figure—particularly something with the aura of the Catholic tradition. In this, he reminded me a bit of Eugene McCarthy, already a friend through our *Commonweal* ties. Both McCarthy and Shriver were Catholics not only by birth but intellectually and knowledgeably, in the way that the Kennedy brothers never were, and both thought the Catholic tradition shed an intellectual light on American perplexities that nothing else rivaled.

Shriver always hired someone—Colman McCarthy, Mark Shields, a legion of others—to play the role I held: someone to talk to about Teilhard de Chardin and Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa and Thérèse of Lisieux and Peter Maurin and G.K. Chesterton and Danilo Dolci and the Worker Priests of France and Cardinal Suhard. Shriver loved the vein of Catholic thought that wanted to "reconstruct the social order," "put the yeast of the gospel in the world," "feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted." He thought of the Catholic faith as a culture-changing force, a shaper of civilizations, an inspirer of great works, a builder of great institutions that bring help of all kinds to the needy in all dimensions of need.

Some people always thought this passion was a Kennedy thing. Shriver had a certain nobility of soul regarding the Kennedys, and I never heard a negative word cross his lips. But Shriver had a sense of his own lineage, needing vindication by nobody else. His family had helped to launch Maryland on the side of Independence, had fought on both sides of the Civil War, and served gallantly in every American war.

Long before he got involved with the Kennedys, he had excelled in prep school (in fact, he bested there, by far, Jack Kennedy), at Yale, in the Experiment in International Living (which took him to Europe every summer until 1939—he was on the last ship to leave France the day the war broke out), in the Navy, at Yale Law School, at *Newsweek*, and in fact at everything he had tried to do.

He had joined the Navy after Yale and emerged a hero from a decisive battle off Guadalcanal. He was from the beginning handsome, dashing, athletic, self-confident, full of fun and zest, a restless thinker, and a man with an instinct for the grand and truly great, and an acute sense of destiny. Well before he met the Kennedys, he was preparing himself for high ambitions, certainly a governorship or Senate seat. Why not? His faith wanted him to, his family expected it, he had been granted great opportunities to prepare for such things, and his inner energy and expectations longed for them.

He was McGovern's second choice to run for vice president in a doomed campaign, and that was as close as he got to the highest peaks of national ambition. He never became president, or governor, or senator. To some, that may seem a curious failure for a man with so much talent and considerable success at every lower level.

With *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*, Scott Stossel has written a really good biography. I hadn't expected it to be; so many such books aren't. But there are many things Stossel tells that I never learned while working for Shriver in that 1970 campaign, or as his speechwriter again during his candidacy as vice president in 1972. On that occasion, the moment Senator Eagleton withdrew his candidacy, I guessed that McGovern, for whom I was then working, would turn to Sarge, so I instantly began writing his acceptance speech; and I showed up unbidden at Timberlawn the morning the news became public. All the old Kennedy speechwriters were there the next day with drafts of an acceptance speech for Sarge. He read them all, and chose mine.

From Stossel I learned the details about the Shrivers (and Shreibers) of Maryland; and about Sarge's mother and her influence on him; and how the great Cardinal Gibbons often used to come to stay with his family for days at a time (and during his final illness) and called them the best Catholic family in Maryland. From Stossel I also learned the dramatic story of his courage and decisive leadership as gunnery officer of the battleship *South Dakota*, which very nearly went down under furious bombardment off Guadalcanal. After that, Sarge trained to gain command of

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a submarine, but on assignment day, he overslept—much to his cold fury at his bad luck. (He was later to learn that all six of his companions who received commands perished at sea.)

The story of Sarge's long, difficult courtship of Eunice, Stossel tells most affectingly through passages from letters. Eunice was such a strong, determined, active, personally driven woman that it speaks extremely highly of Sarge that it was precisely for these qualities that he loved her. That he pursued her so long and so single-mindedly, when other women were falling all over him, is also a great story in itself. That marrying her meant living in the shade of the Kennedys was a burden to him, and yet one he had reflectively and deliberately assumed. He felt the blessing of God in it.

He also took real pleasure in helping his wife to be the leader she is, and he put himself at the service of her dreams in helping with the Special Olympics. Only a Kennedy and a Shriver could have made that happen. It meant mobilizing legions of athletes and movie stars and journalists and publicists and health workers and volunteers. The vision came from Eunice (who from her teenage years longed to help the most needy) but the organizational skill, salesmanship, and jack-of-all-trades talents of Sarge made it happen.

Most people have forgotten, if they ever knew, that Sarge was *almost* Lyndon Johnson's choice for vice president, instead of Hubert Humphrey. Johnson liked and admired Shriver and knew he could be his salesman on Capitol Hill—and also a hedge against the ambitions of Bobby Kennedy. He entrusted Sarge with the War on Poverty. Again, it may not mean much today, but the French loved Sarge when he was ambassador to France. He was everywhere, and glamorous, and intellectual, and all the things the French admire.

In his late-starting 1972 race for the vice presidency, the cause was hopeless. But Mickey Kantor, Mark Shields, Jeanie Mains, Doris Kearns, and a host of talented volunteers poured out to join him. McGovern assigned us the task of winning back the Catholic ethnic vote that Nixon had so knowingly cut into in 1968. We saw a lot of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, occasionally St. Louis, and then around and back again. Toward the end, when the crowds were huge and enthusiastic, we began to feel—unbelievable as it now seems—that the press *must* be wrong, and the campaign might have a chance of winning. What the crowds were actually saying is that they weren't going to vote for us, but we shouldn't take it personally, because they really did like Shriver.

At a factory gate, on one occasion, I watched one of the advance team hand out flyers in a see-through blouse, a miniskirt, high boots, and a big red "Abortion" button. Turning away from her in disgust, the older women weren't meeting Shriver's eyes, and I saw two spit on the ground in anger—this in a factory in Joliet, Illinois, from which the Democrats should have gotten, maybe, 114 percent of the vote. It wasn't Sarge's fault. But such experiences of the Democratic party that year, not respecting its own base, were enough to make a neoconservative out of me.

Most people also forget that Sarge ran for president in 1976. Once again, as in 1970 and 1972, Teddy Kennedy and his professionals didn't rally round. Just before the crucial Massachusetts primary, Stossel relates, after he sat down from a rousing St. Patrick's Day talk at a big luncheon in Boston, Teddy Kennedy got a sharp rebuke from Eunice, because not once had Teddy even mentioned Sarge's name or urged the faithful to help him. We knew back in 1970 and 1972 that Teddy and his guys were carping about Sarge's speeches—once Sarge even threw in a mention of Teilhard de Chardin just to torment them a little. Sarge kept doing things his way, and even today, a number of his best lines keep getting picked up, like his 1970 "culture of life, culture of death" speech.

Ambassador Shriver with Charles de Gaulle.

Stossel is misled on a related point by Mark Shields's telling of the famous anecdote about Sarge, in a crowded ethnic bar, buying drinks for all the workers and then, at his turn, after all the shouts for various American beers, calling out: "Make mine a Courvoisier." Sarge knew exactly what he was doing. He thought if he ordered a beer, everybody there would know he was a phony. He respected other people for being who they were, and he was damned well not going to pretend to be what he wasn't. He admired the hard work, the family life, the faith, the hopes of these guys. But he didn't think they wanted him to be exactly like them. It wasn't Tip O'Neill's way of campaigning, and Sarge may have had it wrong. But he did it his way, and I liked him the more for it.

Even here Stossel, to his credit, gets to the essence of Shriver, for he keeps

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pointing out how much the guys in the bars actually liked Sarge. Stossel isn't so good on why the same guys weren't so sure about the national Democrats any longer—not after McGovern said he would apologize to the North Vietnamese. And not when they listened to Shirley MacLaine going on and on (and there seemed to be ever more radical voices in the national campaign, and fewer and fewer familiar local pols and party "bosses"). The new guys had forgotten that one radical's "party boss" was some regular's source of patronage and garbage service.

After 1976, Shriver turned his attention back to charities and public life, including (in his law work) all sorts of activities to link civil society in Russia to the outside world. (Once, his young son, whom he took on a trip to Russia, chased a ball down the hall, opened a door, and found Russian agents inside minding tapes that were picking up everything the Shrivers did.)

Sarge also kept up his support for all the institutions he had helped get started—and, if you think about it, there are still standing, and sometimes thriving, forty years later a number of truly beloved institutions Sarge Shriver helped to found—not only the Special Olympics, but also the Peace Corps, Upward Bound, Head Start, the less successful Jobs Corps, and not a few initiatives of the much-mocked War on Poverty.

It is astonishing how many of these programs anticipated later writings on civil society. Many were designed to raise flying buttresses outside of government, involving "mediating structures" (most notably, the urban churches and big business and the world of celebrities) and civil society. Much that Shriver had a hand in creating contained significant elements of "compassionate conservatism." A lot of big government liberalism, too—but with an arresting number of conservative elements.

In *Sarge*, Stossel describes the conversation in which many of Shriver's friends advised Sarge not to reveal the early signs of Alzheimer's (which set in three years ago), and Shriver replied, "Reagan had a much worse affliction than I did. Hard-core conservatism. Whatever I've got now, I never suffered from that." I cannot believe Shriver would mean any comment like that cruelly, but it is, in fact, how he often thought of conservatives. Sarge could understand liberal Republicans; many of his Yalie friends were such—he could see the tony similarity that certain Republicans and certain Democrats share in good spirits, which leads them to believe that *they* are not ideological. But people like Reagan seemed to them beyond the pale.

Yet for Shriver, this was not entirely a matter of social class. His ancestors helped found the Maryland Democratic party, and though he would never confuse politics with religion, his politics were quite equally a thing of faith. Those outside that faith seemed to him afflicted. Sarge would experience them as strangers, odd fish, and would feel sad for them. In a political campaign, he would lambaste them with zest. One on one, he would try to charm them, and do his best to try to understand them, as if they were another species.

I used to wonder, over many years, what would happen if Sarge ever came to see the flaws in the Democratic party's way of construing taxes, poverty, crime, welfare, and abortion, and so became a conservative. There were many aspects about his life that could have led him in this direction. His business experience prevented him from being a full-blown leftist on economic policy.

On abortion, he and Eunice were always flat out of accord with their party—but not ready to break from it or even to insist on their voices being heard. I always expected Sarge to have more sympathy than he ever actually showed with those former liberals who had been mugged by reality and become neoconservatives. I even thought, sometimes, that he might join us.

But, the truth is, he really was a Democrat, a party man, all the way down. His loyalty was one of the reasons he was a great man—and also one of the reasons he was never as great in politics as he should have been. ♦

Bad Times

The decline and fall of the New York Times.

BY BOB KOHN

If the praise that humanity and the Pulitzer Prize committee constantly heap upon the *New York Times* is at all deserved, then why is it that people who actually know the paper from within—former staffers and executives—so often have the least flattering things to say about it? Two recent books, and one near-book published in the May 2004 issue of the *Atlantic*, shed some new light on the psychological drama that continues to unfold on Manhattan's West 43rd Street.

Bob Kohn is author of Journalistic Fraud: How the New York Times Distorts the Truth and Why It Can No Longer Be Trusted *(WND Books).*

Burning Down My Masters' House is Jayson Blair's highly anticipated or, depending upon whom you hang out with, much-dreaded memoir of a *New York Times* career characterized by, as the *Times* phrased it, "frequent acts of journalistic fraud." About those infamous frauds themselves, at least, Blair offers up a brutal, even gutsy self-assessment, and in the book's very first sentence: "I lied and I lied—and then I lied some more." No such candid confession is likely to appear anywhere in William Jefferson Clinton's forthcoming memoir.

And yet even the kindest of Blair's reviews have been blistering. According to his critics, the book is, in one combi-

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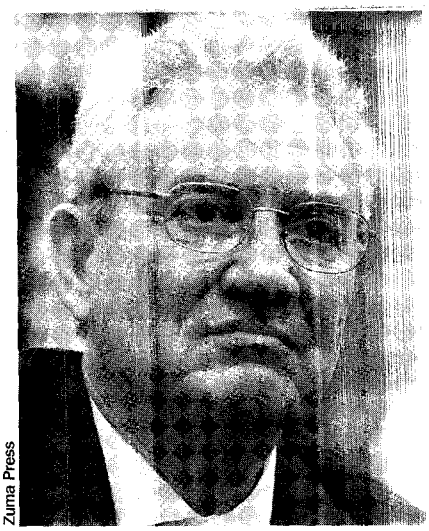

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Howell Raines

nation or another: shoddily written; padded with irrelevancies; devoid of appropriate contrition; the work of a known liar, and therefore untrustworthy; and—worst maybe—a means by which Blair might financially profit from his own misdeeds. Most of these complaints are unfair, and much of what is valuable in the book has escaped the complainers' attention.

That Blair's account of his time at the *Times* is "shoddily written" is a judgment made, most notably, in the unusually vapid critique published by the *New York Times Book Review* itself. But neither the *Times*'s review nor the many others who echoed it made any serious attempt to substantiate the charge. And the charge turns out to be false: *Burning Down My Masters' House* contains some of the most poignant and moving passages ever to appear in a book of its kind. Compared with the sterilized *Times* histories previously generated by sycophants of the paper's dynastic, Sulzberger-family owners, Blair's book reads like classic literature. His talents may be better suited to fiction than biography, but either way, Blair can wield the pen adroitly.

Similarly misplaced is the idea that Blair's book is "padded." Readers seeking an answer to the question, "How could this have happened at the *New York Times*?" will find that Blair has "padded" his pages with precisely what the inquiry demands: a day-to-day account of what was going on in the mind of the perpetrator—and in the newsroom whose culture he absorbed.

So we learn a good deal about Jayson Blair's many personal problems, which can hardly be called irrelevant: cocaine addiction, too much Johnnie Walker scotch, stress, irritation with detached editors and uninteresting assignments, purported sexual abuse as a child, anxiety at being away from his girlfriend, and so on. And we learn a good deal, too, about what the *Times* regularly expects of its employees and how they typically respond—which isn't exactly irrelevant, either. Some of what previous reviewers have construed as finger-pointing is really just Blair making interesting and often acute observations about attitudes and practices in the newsroom. When he first joined the *Times*, his boss wished him luck and then added, "One more thing Jayson. Congratulations on getting the chance to write for the *Times*." It was a pride, Blair observes, that in some staffers "emerged as snobbery and arrogance."

Burning Down My Masters' House
My Life at the New York Times
by Jayson Blair
New Millennium, 298 pp., $24.95

The Battle for Augusta
Hootie, Martha, and the Masters of the Universe
by Alan Shipnuck
Simon & Schuster, 368 pp., $25

The practical consequences of such an atmosphere are everywhere in evidence in Blair's book. He describes a practice known as the "toe-touch," a common way for the *Times* to justify placing an out-of-New York, on-location dateline on a story: All other work on the story having already been done over the phone, the paper has the writer, or even a reporter not otherwise associated with the story, simply fly to the city where the news occurred—and then fly right back again. "It's hard to imagine," Blair remarks, "how many thousands of dollars are spent on 'toe-touch datelines' each month at the *Times*."

According to Blair, even outright dateline fakery was common at the *Times* when he was there. Howell Raines, the executive editor whose career Blair did so much to destroy, wanted to make the paper read as if its correspondents had been everywhere imaginable, and this push "took normal

Getty / J. Emilio Flores

Jayson Blair

dateline deceptions at the *Times* to new heights." Blair is known to have faked datelines while he was reporting on the D.C.-area sniper shootings story—and that is properly thought a scandal. But in *Burning Down My Masters' House* he specifies at least three instances of similar fakery by other reporters working on that same story. If this account of things is true, does it partially absolve Blair of his own transgressions? In context, the answer seems to be a definite "maybe."

On the subject of bias in the newsroom, Blair admits what many critics of the *Times* have been saying all along. News reporters generally cannot resist the temptation to inject their own opinions into their stories, he points out, but a lot of it goes undetected because "it is usually very subtle—giving an extra quote to the side you support, dismissing counterarguments offhand by sandwiching them in between the opposite side." At the *Times*, however, pressures—and personalities—exaggerated this natural tendency. Under Howell Raines, according to Blair, "The message was clear: getting it right was not as important as getting it fast." Moreover, Raines's habit of interference with his reporters' copy "unsettled many of those in the newsroom who said it violated the tenets of objective journalism."

On a somewhat juicier note, Blair describes what he calls the "undeniable perks" of being a *Times* reporter. Reporters who want tickets to a New York Knicks game need only call the *Times* sports department. In exhange for getting their clients mentioned in the paper, public relations people, Blair says, commonly provide reporters with free

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theater tickets, meals, drinks, and sometimes even sex. *Times*men apparently "have a weak spot for sex"—and also for alcohol and drug abuse. "The culture is not one of sobriety," Blair remarked in a recent interview.

There remains the problem of Blair's contrition—or lack thereof. He is "a young black journalist who descended from slaves," his publishers proclaim, and he writes in his book that it is "impossible to divorce the impact of oppressors' actions on the oppressed." It is hard to "assign culpability" when "we are all products of our backgrounds," he suggests, and where African Americans are concerned, this difficulty applies even where serial murder is the issue; at one point in the book, Blair tries in the same breath to exculpate both himself and convicted D.C. sniper Lee Malvo. The devil didn't make them do it; slavery did.

This is perfectly offensive—there being many millions of African Americans who've been driven neither to murder nor plagiarism by the legacy of pre-Civil War history. But it's also a perfect expression of the worldview most of Blair's critics—and the *Times*, for that matter—themselves embrace: ethnic identity and victimization politics. Let him who is without fashionable piety cast the first stone.

Finally, there is the complaint that Blair must now be lying *about* the *Times* because he once earned a paycheck for lying *in* the Times. Jack Shafer's *New York Times Book Review* piece opens with the question, "Should you believe anything written by a serial liar?" And Shafer, a frequent critic of the *Times*, answers no, presuming that the book is "just another installment" in the series. But what an unwarranted gift such a presumption is to the *Times*: A principal participant in the paper's greatest-ever scandal writes an embarrassing tell-all book—and in its very own pages, one of the paper's toughest outside critics announces that the book isn't worth reading. The *Times* could not have hoped for a better outcome.

Readers certainly have a right to question Blair's veracity—and many may feel uncomfortable rewarding Blair's misdeeds with their book-purchasing dollars. But only an incurable skeptic would dismiss him out of hand. And other journalists would be positively foolish to do so. It wasn't even a year ago that the Blair scandal broke, but already no fewer than ten newspapers, including *USA Today*, have since fired or otherwise punished reporters caught falsifying or plagiarizing stories. If anything, it appears that the problem of reporters committing crimes against the truth is on the rise. Surely the confessions of those who've been caught should be studied, not stifled.

Howell Raines and Jayson Blair seem cut from the same cloth. Each feels that his ethical convictions (such as they are) are an inescapable product of his background. For Blair, it is slavery. For Raines it is the slave ownership of his southern white ancestors. And with both men, little room is left over for personal responsibility. Raines, in his 20,000-word *ex culpa* for the *Atlantic* entitled *My Times*, says "I repeatedly take responsibility for the failure to capture Jayson Blair"—and then, like Blair, Raines goes on to fix blame upon everyone around him: newsroom "dukedoms," a "ramshackle personnel system," and a "small enclave of neoconservative editors."

Raines would have us believe that a not-so-vast, right-wing conspiracy at the *Times*'s 43rd Street headquarters was crucial to his downfall: a "neoconservative editor" wrote a memorandum recommending Jayson Blair's dismissal long before Blair wound up nuking the newsroom—but Raines wasn't on the distribution list! "I do feel that had I been in the bureaucratic loop on the memo, the Jayson Blair story would have ended," Raines says. Even the man's most sympathetic readers won't likely fall for that line. As Raines elsewhere acknowledges, one of his own lieutenants once described him as "a kind of control freak who doesn't like details." It's fair to ask then: If Raines *had* been copied on the memo, would he have given it more than a moment's thought?

And if he had paid attention, would it have mattered? Raines admits that he had been cutting Blair "slack" and that even quite late in the day he was prepared to give the young reporter a "second chance." Hoping that Blair would demonstrate "a level of vitality and social engagement" suggesting recovery from alcoholism—and quickly persuading himself that what he hoped for was real—Raines then immediately assigned Blair to the team of *Times* reporters covering the D.C. sniper story. What else could a self-described "white man from Alabama" with "strong conviction" about the evils of racial prejudice do? And how do you suppose he would have reacted to advice from a "neoconservative editor" that Blair should simply have been fired instead? Affirmative inaction would still have ruled the day.

Raines's is the "padded" account of things, not Blair's. Raines is long—and redundant—on diagnosis of his former paper's flaws. The *Times* is a mess, he says, a dozen different ways: "not nearly as good as it could be and ought to be," desperate for "improvements in the quality of its journalism," shot through with "sloppy work," "Victorian affectation," and a "mañana" attitude. The paper's Business, Science, Sports, and Arts & Leisure sections are chronically "weak."

Very few of Raines's 20,000 words are devoted to providing specific examples of the problems to which he refers in such broad strokes, however. And indeed, certain facts that Raines selectively omits suggest that he's wrong on almost every count. He criticizes his predecessor Joseph Lelyveld for producing a "calcified front-page," for example, but fails to note that it was the "clock-punching" staff of editors and reporters assembled by Lelyveld that put together the *Times*'s Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of 9/11.

Moreover, Raines is maddeningly vague about what medicine he would prescribe to the ailing *Times*. And here, too, he is unconvincing. Raines says that he and current publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. operated under the assumption that improving the "quality" of the paper would enhance its "marketability." And it was on that theory, he continues, that Raines decided to move

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the vitriolic voice of Frank Rich—the man whose "intestines" Mel Gibson would like to see "on a stick"—off the *Times* op-ed page and over to the Arts & Leisure section. Arts & Leisure had become "dull and stultifying." Rich promised to provide it the "energy" necessary to broaden the paper's reach.

Broaden the paper's reach to *whom*, though? To the 80 million potential Christian readers who populate the South and the nation's heartland? On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest that reversing the paper's left-wing tilt, even tilting it over rightward a ways, would be a much more effective means to expand its reach to a national audience whose views and tastes are more diverse than those of Manhattan's Upper Left side.

The front-page "energy" Raines desired was achieved with headlines and lead sentences slanted in favor of the same liberal causes championed on the paper's editorial page. It is no surprise that in *My Times* Raines makes no reference to basic journalistic concepts like objectivity, fairness, or even accuracy. Nor does Raines respond to charges made that he personally directed the slanting or falsification of news articles. Just last August, David Margolick reported in *Vanity Fair* that Raines once directly attempted to inject his ideas into a reporter's story. "The only problem was," that reporter remembered, "it wasn't true," and even the compromise version the *Times* ended up publishing was "still close enough to a falsehood to make me very uncomfortable."

Such is the "quality of journalism" that Howell Raines imagines would make the *Times* more appealing to a national audience.

Alan Shipnuck's *The Battle for Augusta National: Hootie, Martha, and the Masters of the Universe* is a detailed account of one paradigmatic episode in Raines's reign at the *New York Times*: the editor's attempt to "flood the zone" with ideologically driven "news" stories about the all-male membership policy of a tiny but venerable golf club. In his *Atlantic* piece, Raines is oddly silent on the subject. But it's clear from Shipnuck's book that

Reuters / Landov

[illegible] National golf club in 2004.

Raines was [illegible] fascinated by Augusta National. And Shipnuck makes a persuasive case that this obsession significantly contributed to Raines's eventual downfall.

The Battle for Augusta National is really the story of a war and its concurrent battles between "Hootie" and "Martha," the press and the club, internet bloggers and print reporters, and political correctness and common sense—together with all the collateral damage suffered by professional golfers, their corporate sponsors, CBS, and the residents, businesses, and law enforcement officers of Augusta, Georgia.

As it happens, the least important (if most symbolic) of these battles was the one waged between William Woodward "Hootie" Johnson, chairman of the Augusta National Golf Club and Martha Burk, the women's rights activist who led the charge against the club's all-male membership policy. By remarkable coincidence, "Hootie" was Martha Burk's childhood nickname. But there the resemblance ends.

Nowadays, an activist press stands ever ready to provide "progressive" blowhards a megaphone through which to upbraid any businessman who dares resist the cause of the day. And in such an environment, executives concerned to guard their corporate assets have learned how best to deal with groups like Martha Burk's National Council of Women's Organizations: ignore them and hope they go away. Which is what might very well have happened. In this instance, Burk was representing a "vicum" class comprising just a handful of extremely successful women, most of them millionaires, who already had full access to the golf course and all its associated facilities—the men's locker room excepted. Burk's argument was that these women nevertheless bore a discriminatory economic disadvantage by remaining ineligible for formal Augusta National membership. She sent Hootie a nine-sentence letter to that effect. Had he just quietly discarded the letter, that might have been the end of it.

But Hootie Johnson is a man of principle, not expedience. And he is not a man accustomed to receiving criticism for his stance on nondiscrimination. It was Johnson who led the effort to desegretate higher education in South Carolina during the 1970s, Johnson who sought removal of the Confederate flag from South Carolina's Capitol building, Johnson who became the first white man from the deep South to serve on the board of the national Urban League, and Johnson who helped secure the admission of Augusta National's first black member. Hootie Johnson, who knew something about real discrimination, was inclined to think Augusta's policy on women was more akin to the innocent customs of a social club. "Men like to get together with men every now and then, and women like to get together with women every now and then," he explained. It's a "natural thing," a "simple fact of life."

And so Hootie Johnson, offended by the suggestion that he might be involved in anything more pernicious

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than that, did not quietly discard Martha Burk's nine-sentence letter. Instead, he prepared a three-page response declaring that his club would not be "bullied, threatened, or intimidated" into changing its membership rules. And as for the press: Bring 'em on. Johnson's reply to Burk took the form of a press release emailed to eight major media outlets across the country.

The media needed no further invitation. Led by Howell Raines's *New York Times*, the press formed itself into a fearsome coalition behind Martha Burk. According to Shipnuck, over a four-month period beginning in July 2002, the *Times* published more than 40 news stories, editorials, and opinion columns about Augusta National. During a single week in the fall of that year, the *Times* "devoted as much space to Augusta National as it would during Masters week" the following spring. One *Times* editorial called for Tiger Woods to boycott the Masters tournament.

But Hootie had long before prepared the club for this onslaught. After holding a bake-off between two public relations firms seeking Augusta's business, Johnson chose a small D.C. public relations firm run by Jim McCarthy, who Shipnuck credits as one of the "stars" of the ensuing campaign.

Early on, McCarthy decided that to win the battle he had to take the press head on, making criticism of the media itself a part of the story. "Stopping the *New York Times* dead in its tracks," he said, "was critical to the overall effort, because the *Times* sets the agenda for the broader media world."

And the Internet was important, too. Immediately after Johnson hired him, McCarthy began "steering information and planting ideas" with about a dozen bloggers and media critics, including Andrew Sullivan, Mickey Kaus, Jack Shafer, and Jim Romenesko. When the *Times*'s crusade against Augusta National culminated in a front-page article declaring "CBS Staying Silent in Debate on Women Joining Augusta," a story that had been assigned by Raines, the seeds sown by McCarthy brought forth a full crop of criticism from the blogging community.

Linking to postings on *Slate.com* by Shafer and Kaus, Sullivan commented on Shafer's "excellent job limning the now comical hyping of non-news stories to fit Raines's paleo-liberal agenda." Kaus, who also linked to Shafer, opined that the *Times* front-pager "might as well have been headlined 'CBS Fails to Pay Attention to *New York Times* Crusade.'" Shafer, in turn, linked to Sridhar Pappu, the former media columnist for the *New York Observer*, who uncovered further evidence that troubles were brewing between Raines and his staff—troubles that had first been reported by yet another blogger, John Ellis, in May 2002. Kaus linked back to Sullivan. Jim Romenesko, who runs a left-leaning media blog on *Poynter.org*, linked to Shafer and Kaus. And, once the mainstream media finally caught up with the story, Romenesko also linked to *Newsweek*'s Seth Mnookin—who, of course, quoted Shafer.

One day after former CBS chairman Jim Wyman announced that he was resigning from Augusta National in protest of the no-women policy—Howell Raines must have thought himself on the verge of triumph—the *New York Daily News* dropped the golf war's biggest bombshell, revealing the *Times* had killed two sports columns, one by Pulitzer Prize-winner Dave Anderson, because they differed with the paper's editorial stance. At that point, "Romenesko's blog nearly melted," reports Shipnuck. The rest of American journalism had joined the fray, with virtually every commentator excoriating not Hootie Johnson but Howell Raines. "The story is no longer sex discrimination but journalistic integrity," beamed McCarthy.

Shipnuck recounts the circus atmosphere leading up to the Masters and during the week of the tournament itself: Martha Burk's efforts to assemble an effective protest near the gates of Augusta National; her unsuccessful legal battles with local law enforcement officials over the time, place, and manner of that protest; the brief entry and exit by Jesse Jackson; news conferences and interviews with Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, and other golfers expressing discomfort over the controversy; residents and local businessmen caught in the fray; and the usual Elvis impersonators and T-shirt salesmen—along with one journalistic prank that by itself is worth the price of the book.

On the opening day of the Masters tournament, there were only 40 people attending Martha's protest. When the tournament was over, Hootie held a press conference of his own, after which the press corps universally acknowledged him the victor.

There were multiple losers—like Bryant Gumbel, whose membership in an all-male country club was mercilessly exposed to a wide audience by Jim McCarthy on Gumbel's own show. Martha Burk scathed herself through a number of too-obvious, embarrassing inconsistencies, but it could have been worse for her; she at least emerged from the affair with sufficient name-recognition and notoriety to earn herself a book advance. And it could even have been worse for the *New York Times* as an institution. Shipnuck's book is otherwise meticulously researched, but he has somehow missed the connection between Augusta National's membership roster—in the person of former IBM chief executive John Akers—and the *Times*'s board of directors. For some reason, throughout the crisis, Martha Burk never once demanded that John Akers resign from Hootie's club. And Howell Raines never once ordered up a story headlined "*Times* Board Member Staying Silent in Debate on Women Joining Augusta."

It would have been nice to hear Raines's explanation for this oversight. As it is, we are left with Shipnuck's account of the brief interview the defrocked editor granted him. Raines still defends the crusade he conducted against Augusta National—as a means of helping the *Times*'s Sports section "shed its parochial traditions." How the substitution of sociology for "parochial" traditions of sportswriting and commentary might have improved the journalistic quality of his paper—or strengthened its appeal to people interested in sports as *sports*—Raines does not say. ♦

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"I'd like to exchange this Old Testament for a New Testament."

Books in Brief

***From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations* by Amitai Etzioni (Palgrave Macmillan, 272 pp., $29.95).** At one point during the early 1990s, Amitai Etzioni seemed to be everywhere—in Clinton's White House, among centrists on Capitol Hill—promoting the communitarianism he helped found. It was a movement that was explicitly "beyondist," claiming to transcend the clash between liberals and conservatives with a new golden rule: "Respect and uphold society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy."

In Etzioni's latest book, the rule is elevated to geopolitics. He describes the world as divided into East (with reverence for social order) and West (with exaltation of individual autonomy) and foresees the emergence of a global "good society" that synthesizes the best of both. The war on terror, he warns, should not be seen as a clash of civilizations. And by pushing democratic freedoms on the East, we take an approach that is not only patronizing but almost explicitly colonialist.

From Empire to Community rejects the Bush administration's foreign policy in general, but not in many particulars. Etzioni argues, for example, that in the new community of nations, the threat of opprobrium will be more effective than the threat of force. And yet, "deterrence will no longer do," he writes. "Those who might employ WMD or give them to terrorists must be defanged one way or the other." Etzioni even insists that arms control must be backed by the threat of force—which makes his demand for a "Dialogue of Civilizations" a little piquant: global communitarianism, with a big stick just in case things go wrong.

—Mario Loyola

***Thirty Days: An Inside Account of Tony Blair at War* by Peter Stothard (Perennial, 244 pp., $13.95).** Much ink has been spilled trying to capture the essence of Tony Blair. Peter Stothard's *Thirty Days* attempts to go where the biographies, cabinet tell-alls, and tabloid exposés have been unable to tread: inside Blair's inner circle of advisers. Stothard, a former editor of the *Times* of London, was granted unparalleled access to the prime minister and his staff during what was perhaps the most momentous month of Tony Blair's seven years in power. Items on the agenda during this period included deal making at the United Nations before the war, the war's early stages, and the political fallout in Britain.

Stothard's account is occasionally more diary than book. He spends much time discussing the setting in which meetings take place, down to the photos on Blair's desk or the fashion choices of Blair's colleagues on weekends: Hilary Armstrong "has abandoned her grandmotherly office gray for a soft cream leather jacket. John Reid is in leather too, harder and black. Gordon Brown is wearing a black-and-white rugby shirt. Sally Morgan is in a blue sweater." Once you get past these atmospherics, however, Tony Blair is revealed in these pages as a man sure of his mission and steadfast in his support for the United States. He masterfully thwarts cabinet defections and rebellious MPs, while enduring French obstruction at the United Nations and in Brussels.

We will need to wait for Tony Blair's memoirs to learn which factors were uppermost in his mind when he put his political career on the line in the spring of 2003, while a skeptical Britain protested outside his window. Stothard suggests that Blair's "powerful Christian seriousness" is a factor, contributing to his close relationship with President Bush, who shares his moral certainty about the world.

This may be true, but it is likely that the answer is more straightforward. Blair respects America in a way uncommon in Europe. As he explained in his moving address to a joint session of Congress last year, "Our job, my nation that watched you grow, that you fought alongside and now fights alongside you, that takes enormous pride in our alliance and great affection in our common bond, our job is to be there with you."

—Jamie M. Fly

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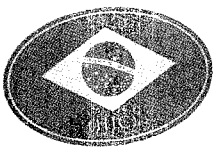
Parody

Brazil's Supreme Court temporarily blocked the expulsion of a New York Times correspondent who wrote an article that offended President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva by suggesting he was a heavy drinker. The decision means Larry Rohter will be allowed to stay until the court decides whether the cancellation of his visa was constitutional.
***—Washington Post*, May 14, 2004**



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PRESS RELEASE
DATE: May 15, 2004

PRESIDENT EMPHATICALLY REJECTS DRINKING CLAIMS

The Brazilian government rejects in the strongest possible terms the suggestion that it has expelled the New York Times columnist Larry Rohter for suggestions that the president of the Brazilian Republic drinks too much. This is preposterous – both the allegation of alcohol abuse itself and that other thing just mentioned. I'm sorry, I lost my train of thought.

Occasionally after a hard day at the martini, Mr. da Silva will pour himself an office. But it is strictly in the line of duty. The Brazilian government rejects in the strongest possible terms that other train of thought by the guy who works at the New York Sun-Times. Other government officials drink far more than Mr. da Silva. At a diplomatic reception in March at which Mr. da Silva had six champagne cocktails, Mr. Luis Embriagado, minister of samba, had eight. Mr. Andres da Cachaca, minister of beef, had nine.

These quantities were established in a roadside discussion between Mr. da Silva and his wife shortly after the party, when they addressed, first, whether Mrs. da Silva was keeping the president on an unreasonably short leash and, second, whether the goddamn ungrateful woman didn't want to goddamn walk home since she never let him have any fun. Anyway, Mr. Embriagado, minister of samba, had eight cocktails that night. Even if Mrs. da Silva says he had six. Just like the president did. And he didn't even finish one of them because a waiter took it away, so it was really five-and-a-half. The president, however, could outdrink any of his cabinet ministers if he chose.

If Mr. Robles has something to say to the president, he should come over here and say it if he thinks he's such a tough guy. The president doesn't like the look of him. Your New York Post doesn't scare me. Show me the way to go home. I'm tired and I want to go to bed.

- trinta -

the weekly Standard
May 24, 2004

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No Child Left Behind: How to Ace Those Tests

One reason that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is important and promising is that it focuses on reading. By the same token, one reason that NCLB sometimes distorts education for the worse is that it focuses on reading. The paradox arises from the fact that **our schools do not yet fully understand what they need to do to raise reading scores**. Many have accepted that phonics is best taught systematically. That's a plus. But goaded by the new law, many schools are intensively doing counterproductive things like strategy exercises and test prep that can not significantly improve reading comprehension.

Reading is the key to most academic achievement. Hence the emphasis of NCLB is welcome, as is its insistence on accountability through student tests. For, despite the chorus of complaints about standard reading tests, they are very reliable: they correlate highly with each other, and they accurately measure real-world reading ability.

The negative, unintended consequences of NCLB have emerged, not so much from the law itself but from the failure of our schools of education to instruct teachers and administrators in the true nature of reading achievement. Anxious educators have turned elementary schools into test-prep factories. In California, for example, the state has mandated that students spend at least 150 minutes each day on reading in the early grades. A great deal of this time is spent on trivial tales and on constantly repeated content-poor exercises in "classifying" and "finding the main idea." The desperate response of the schools to test pressure has been to excise history, science, and the arts and replace them with still more such exercises in reading. This is a futile strategy since reading achievement depends on broad knowledge of history, science, and the arts. The dull exercises in "comprehension strategies," which have been shown to be largely useless, take up great stretches of time in all the reading programs. Hence the small initial rise in reading scores yielded by these intense, misguided efforts will level off to everyone's disappointment. Reader, you first read that prediction here!

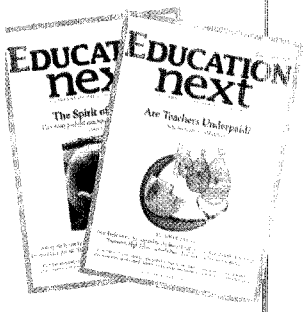
There is a way to avoid this self-defeating consequence of focusing on "reading." Within the long stretches of time allocated to reading, **schools should start teaching a solid, cumulative curriculum that replaces the time now being devoted to trivial content and fruitless comprehension exercises**. This approach to reading would spend long, coherent stretches of time on such topics as the early civil rights movement, the biology of farming, the nature of magnetism, and the geography of Africa.

Under this new sort of reading instruction (which is really very old) students would not be prepped for reading tests per se because, beyond learning how to take tests in general, there is no way you can specially prep for a reading test. If strategic test prep worked, our students' scores would now be a lot better than they are. No, the way to prep for a reading test is to gain broad knowledge. The classroom tests we give our students should be tests of the coherent knowledge they are being taught. Giving them that kind of test semester after semester will gradually raise their scores on standard reading tests. In time it will raise them dramatically. In fact, there is no other way of raising those reading scores dramatically.

—E. D. Hirsch Jr.

E. D. Hirsch Jr. is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. Hirsch is also the founder and chairman of the nonprofit Core Knowledge Foundation.

INTERESTED IN CUTTING-EDGE IDEAS ABOUT K–12 EDUCATION?



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